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January 21, 2016

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
Chairman
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Alexander and Ranking Member Murray:

On behalf of The Pew Charitable Trusts, an independent nonpartisan, nonprofit research and policy organization, I am writing to express support for S.480 - National All Schedules Prescription Electronic Reporting Reauthorization Act of 2015 (NASPER). Pew's Prescription Drug Abuse Project works to develop and support policies that will help reduce the inappropriate use of prescription drugs while ensuring that patients with medical needs have access to effective pain management.

NASPER would provide much needed funding to states to help maintain and enhance prescription drug monitoring programs (PDMPs). State-based PDMPs are a critical tool in the fight against prescription drug abuse. By tracking the dispensing of certain controlled substances, including opioids, these electronic databases help prescribers and pharmacists identify patients at risk for drug misuse or abuse so that they can coordinate appropriate care for their vulnerable patients. In addition to funding these important monitoring programs, NASPER would advance state efforts to integrate data within health information technologies, such as electronic health records, thereby making the information more easily accessible by prescribers.

There is broad bicameral bipartisan support for NASPER in Congress. The companion bill, H.R.1725, passed the House of Representatives by voice vote on September 8, 2015. Pew urges you to report out this important legislation from the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions and encourage passage of the bill on the Senate floor. We look forward to working with you to address the nation's prescription drug abuse epidemic.

Sincerely,

Cynthia Reilly, B.S. Pharm.
Director, Prescription Drug Abuse Project
The Pew Charitable Trusts