



## President Obama Signs 21st Century Cures Act

### *ENA President Attends in Support of Mental Health Reform & Opioid Abuse Prevention*

(December 13, 2016) – The [Emergency Nurses Association](#) (ENA) thanks President Obama for signing into law the 21st Century Cures Act which includes comprehensive mental healthcare reform and funding to address the opioid and heroin crisis. ENA President Kathleen E. Carlson, MSN, RN, CEN, FAEN, attended the signing ceremony today at the White House complex. Carlson was one of more than 100 ENA members who advocated on Capitol Hill earlier this year for comprehensive mental healthcare reform.

Key elements in the Act that will improve the treatment of those suffering from serious mental illnesses include the elimination of the prohibition on same-day billing for mental health and primary care services in Medicaid, additional resources for suicide prevention and expanded crisis intervention training for first responders.

The legislation also contains \$1 billion in grants to states to expand their prescription opioid and heroin abuse prevention and treatment initiatives, such as the training of health care providers, improving prescription drug monitoring programs, implementing prevention activities and expanding access to opioid treatment programs.

“The 21st Century Cures Act is a huge step forward in helping those who suffer from mental illness and opioid and heroin abuse,” said Carlson. “Emergency nurses are on the frontlines of emergency care. Every day, they witness the effect that limited community resources have on those suffering from mental illness and opioid addiction. These patients will finally start to get the treatment they deserve.”

Mental health reform was championed in the House by Rep. Tim Murphy, R-Pa. and Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson, D-Texas, and in the Senate by Sen. Lamar Alexander, R-Tenn., Sen. Patty Murray D-Wash., Sen. Bill Cassidy, R-La., and Sen. Chris Murphy, D-Conn. Important provisions of their bills were rolled into the 21st Century Cures Act which received overwhelming support in the House and Senate.

In addition to lobbying for mental health care reform on Capitol Hill, ENA also released its [Naloxone Education Toolkit \(NET\)](#) earlier this year in response to the opioid and heroin overdose epidemic. NET is designed to assist emergency nurses with providing education to patients and their family or peers who present to the emergency setting with an opioid overdose, or those who are determined to be at risk for an overdose.

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#### **About the Emergency Nurses Association**

The Emergency Nurses Association (ENA) is the premier professional nursing association dedicated to defining the future of emergency nursing through advocacy, education, research, innovation, and leadership. Founded in 1970, ENA has proven to be an indispensable resource to the global emergency nursing community. With more than 42,000 members worldwide, ENA advocates for patient safety, develops industry-leading practice standards and guidelines, and guides emergency healthcare public policy. ENA members have expertise in triage, patient care, disaster preparedness, and all aspects of emergency care. Additional information is available at [www.ena.org](http://www.ena.org).