

Written Testimony by Congressman David Trone (MD-06)
House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
Member Day
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Thank you, Chairman Graves, Ranking Member Larsen, and members of the Committee, for the opportunity to offer testimony on issues of importance to our constituents as you work on the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Reauthorization legislation.

Drug overdoses impact every community. Overdoses contribute to the premature deaths of, now, over 100,000 Americans every year. That is over 250 people per day, leaving millions of loved ones grieving. Overdoses are the leading cause of death for Americans aged 18-45. Nonfatal overdoses from opioids are even more common, with over 181,000 occurring in the United States last year. As the Co-Founder and Co-Chair of the Bipartisan Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Task Force, combating the overdose epidemic has been my top priority since coming to Congress.

More and more of these tragic overdoses are happening in public, including on air travel. I commend the FAA for working with the Aerospace Medical Association (AsMA) to review the contents of the Emergency Medical Kits as directed through H.R. 302, the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018 (P.L. 115-254). As a part of the recommendations laid forth by AsMA, an opioid antagonist was recommended as an addition to the contents of aircraft Emergency Medical Kits. While I applaud the efforts of the FAA to encourage all airlines to voluntarily carry naloxone as part of the lifesaving kits on aircraft, I remain concerned that flight crews are not adequately prepared with the tools and training to respond to opioid overdoses. I believe we need a stronger approach to ensure every flight is equipped with lifesaving medication.

While many people who experience an overdose knowingly use illicit opioids, others overdose after consuming counterfeit pills or other drugs that they believed to be opioid-free, like Adderall or Xanax. In February 2023, the *Los Angeles Times* reported fentanyl-laced counterfeit pills being dispensed by state-regulated pharmacies in Mexico. In fact, over 70% of the pills analyzed in popular tourist destinations (Tijuana, Cabo San Lucas, and San José del Cabo) tested positive for illicit drugs. With nearly 12 million Americans visiting Mexico every year, these counterfeit pills pose a clear threat to American lives – we must respond deliberately and urgently to ensure Americans are able to return home safely.

Therefore, I encourage the Committee to require lifesaving opioid overdose reversal medication on all domestic and international flights in the United States.

Thank you for your consideration. I look forward to working with you to ensure that the FAA Reauthorization provides for emergency medical kits which reflect our priorities and needs as a nation.