



FEDERAL NEWS

21st Century Cures Act would impact counties

Yesterday, following last week's 392-26 vote in the House, the Senate passed [H.R. 34 - The 21st Century Cures Act](#), which includes provisions related to criminal justice, mental health and addiction—key NACo priorities. With a 94-5 vote, the Senate sends the bill to the president's desk this weekend for his signature, and he has already indicated his support. Some of the provisions will help counties by:

- **Reducing the number of people with mental illness in jails:** By reauthorizing the [Mentally Ill Offender Treatment and Crime Reduction Act \(MIOTCRA\)](#), the bill will support local efforts to decrease mental illness in jails through a broad range of activities, including jail diversion programs, mental health courts, in-jail treatments and transitional services and crisis intervention training.
- **Providing community-based behavioral health services:** By reauthorizing the [Community Mental Health Services \(CMHS\) and Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment \(SAPT\)](#) block grants, the bill will continue to allow counties, through 750 behavioral health authorities and community providers, to deliver direct behavioral health services to those with mental health conditions and substance abuse disorders.
- **Combating the opioid epidemic:** By authorizing \$1 billion over two years for state grants to supplement opioid abuse prevention and treatment activities, lawmakers have taken a significant step in efforts to end the opioid epidemic. While this is a positive first step, until Congress appropriates funds for these bills, local opioid programs will not receive additional federal support. The appropriation of significant funding for local opioid programs was one of the recommendations made to federal leaders in a [report recently released by NACo's Task Force on the Opioid Epidemic](#), jointly launched this year with the National League of Cities.

NACo has serious concerns with how Congress plans to pay for the \$6.3 billion legislation. We must continue to work with Congress to ensure that provisions within this bill are fully appropriated. [Read more...](#)