

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 1, 2026

The Honorable Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C., 20201

Secretary Kennedy:

We write to demand that you reinstate federal funding for fentanyl test strips, which are a key tool in the fight against opioid overdoses. At a time when communities across the country are working urgently to reduce overdose deaths, limiting access to life-saving harm reduction tools runs directly counter to that mission and will put lives at risk.

Public health research shows that fentanyl test strips empower individuals with information that can help them avoid deadly exposure. These tools do not encourage or increase drug use; rather, they prompt safer behavior and facilitate engagement with health and treatment services. States, municipalities, and community organizations have adopted test strip programs because they save lives with minimal cost. Removing federal funding for these efforts threatens to create gaps in services, especially for youth and those in rural, underserved, and high risk areas, precisely when the synthetic opioid crisis continues to escalate.

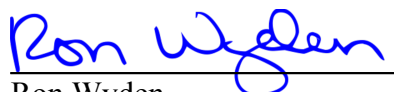
Less than five months ago, Donald Trump signed the SUPPORT for Patients and Communities Reauthorization Act of 2025 into law with strong bipartisan support in both the House and Senate. Section 113 of this law expressly provides that federal grant funding for state and tribal response to opioid use disorders may be used to “facilitate access to products used to prevent overdose deaths by detecting the presence of one or more substances, such as fentanyl and xylazine test strips.” Despite this, you have chosen to remove this key support without warning.

According to data from the Centers for Disease Control State Unintentional Drug Overdose Reporting System (SUDORS), of the 53,336 overdose deaths reported in 2024, 67.5% of these deaths had at least one opportunity for intervention. Test strips play a critical role in preventing these overdoses. Because of the efficacy of fentanyl test strips, many state and county health authorities and law enforcement rely on test strips for their counter-fentanyl strategies. Your actions will directly undermine the work of law enforcement and put lives at risk.

In addition to blocking federal funding for fentanyl test strips, you have also moved to block funding for xylazine and medetomidine test strips. Rates of xylazine use, a powerful veterinary sedative, continue to rise in polydrug mixes and counterfeit medications. Drug users often ingest xylazine without knowing it, often resulting in overdose deaths. Likewise, medetomidine is a powerful veterinary sedative 100 or more times stronger than xylazine is also increasingly being encountered in seized illicit fentanyl. The ability to test for these drugs is absolutely critical to avoid another wave of fatal overdoses in the United States.

Doing away with this mainstay of overdose prevention runs directly counter to this administration's own promises to crack down on the opioid epidemic in the United States, as well as the clear intent of Congress. We demand that you reinstate this funding before American lives are lost as a direct result.

Sincerely,



Ron Wyden  
United States Senator



Christopher A. Coons  
United States Senator



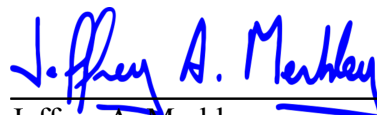
Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator



Alex Padilla  
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse  
United States Senator



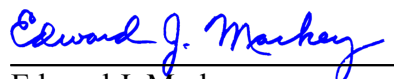
Jeffrey A. Merkley  
United States Senator



Angela D. Alsobrooks  
United States Senator



Mazie K. Hirono  
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey  
United States Senator



Jacky Rosen  
United States Senator



Tina Smith  
United States Senator