

## **Jessie's Law (S. 581)**

**Introduced by Senators Joe Manchin and Shelley Moore Capito**

*Cosponsors: Senators Klobuchar and Feinstein*

In March 2016, we lost a young woman with great potential named Jessica Grubb. Jessie was a great student, a loving daughter and sister, and an avid runner. She was also recovering from an opioid addiction. When she had surgery for an infection related to a running injury, her parents were there to take care of her and told her doctors and hospital personnel that she was a recovering addict and not to be prescribed opioids.

Unfortunately, Jessie's discharging physician did not know that she was a recovering addict and sent her home with a prescription for 50 oxycodone pills. Her parents talked to her on the phone when she got home, but that was the last time they talked to her. She had passed away that night in her sleep. The temptation was too great for her, as it would be for so many recovering addicts. Her death was tragic, but preventable.

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This legislation seeks to keep this from ever happening again by ensuring that when individuals and their families are open about a person's past addiction, healthcare providers will have access to the information that they need to provide medically appropriate care and save lives.

Specifically, the bill would require the Department of Health and Human Services to establish best practices for hospitals and physicians for sharing information about a patient's past opioid addiction when that information is shared by the patient with the healthcare provider. The best practices will take into account:

- The potential for relapse or overdose death if opioid medications are prescribed to an individual recovering from opioid addiction.
- The benefit of displaying past opioid addiction in a manner similar to other potentially lethal medical concerns, including drug allergies.
- The need for such information to be prominently displayed when a physician or medical professional is prescribing medication.
- The need for appropriate medical professionals, including physicians, nurses, and pharmacists, to have access to a patient's history of substance use disorder when prescribing or dispensing opioid medication.
- The importance of protecting a patient's privacy.