June 26, 2020

Senator Mitch McConnell (R-KY) Senator Charles E. Schumer (D-NY)
Republican Leader Leader of the Democratic Caucus
U.S. Senate U.S. Senate

Senator Ron Johnson (R-WI) Senator Gary C. Peters (D-MI)
Chairman Ranking Member
Committee on Homeland Security and Committee on Homeland Security and
Governmental Affairs Governmental Affairs
U.S. Senate U.S. Senate

Urging the Senate to Pass H.R.4739 – The Synthetic Opioid Exposure Prevention and Training Act

Dear Leaders McConnell, Leader Schumer, Senator Johnson, and Senator Peters:

AIHA, representing approximately 8,500 occupational health and safety professionals, urges the Senate to take up and pass H.R.4739, the Synthetic Opioid Exposure Prevention and Training Act. This bipartisan bill would help protect U.S. Customs and Border Protect (CBP) officers, agents, other personnel, and canines from occupational exposure to synthetic opioids by requiring CBP to develop a policy that contains specific protocols and procedures on the safe handling of and exposure to potential synthetic opioids, such as fentanyl. The bill would also require recurring training on the safe handling of synthetic opioids and how to access and administer opioid receptor antagonists, such as naloxone, if an exposure to fentanyl or a related substance is suspected.

Fentanyl is a powerful drug that is 50 to 100 times more potent than heroin or morphine. Exposure to the fentanyl and related substances can be deadly. The danger of occupational exposure to synthetic opioids is particularly acute for CBP personnel, who serve on the frontlines of illegal drug interdiction efforts, seizing more than one ton of illicit drugs every day.¹

Background on AIHA
AIHA is a professional association for occupational health and safety science professionals who are committed to preserving and ensuring health and safety in the workplace and community. Founded in 1939, we support our members with our expertise, network, comprehensive education programs and other products and services that help them maintain the highest professional standards. More than half of AIHA’s nearly 8,500 members are Certified Industrial Hygienists, and many hold other professional designations. AIHA has an active Opioids Working Group, whose mission is to “To provide a forum in support of worker safety that addresses the impact of the opioid crisis in the workplace and among emergency responders. To share information among Working Group members and participate in the development of materials and initiatives to carry out the mission.”

For additional information please visit www.aiha.org.

Next Actions
On behalf of AIHA, I urge the Senate to quickly take up and pass H.R.4739, The Synthetic Opioid Exposure Prevention and Training Act. AIHA looks forward to working with you to help protect the health and safety of CBP personnel and all workers. Please feel free to reach out to Mark Ames, AIHA’s director of government relations, at mames@aiha.org or (703) 846-0730.

Sincerely,

Lindsay Cook, CIH, CSP, FAIHA
President
AIHA

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