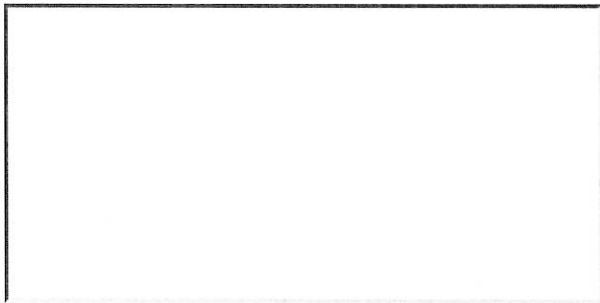


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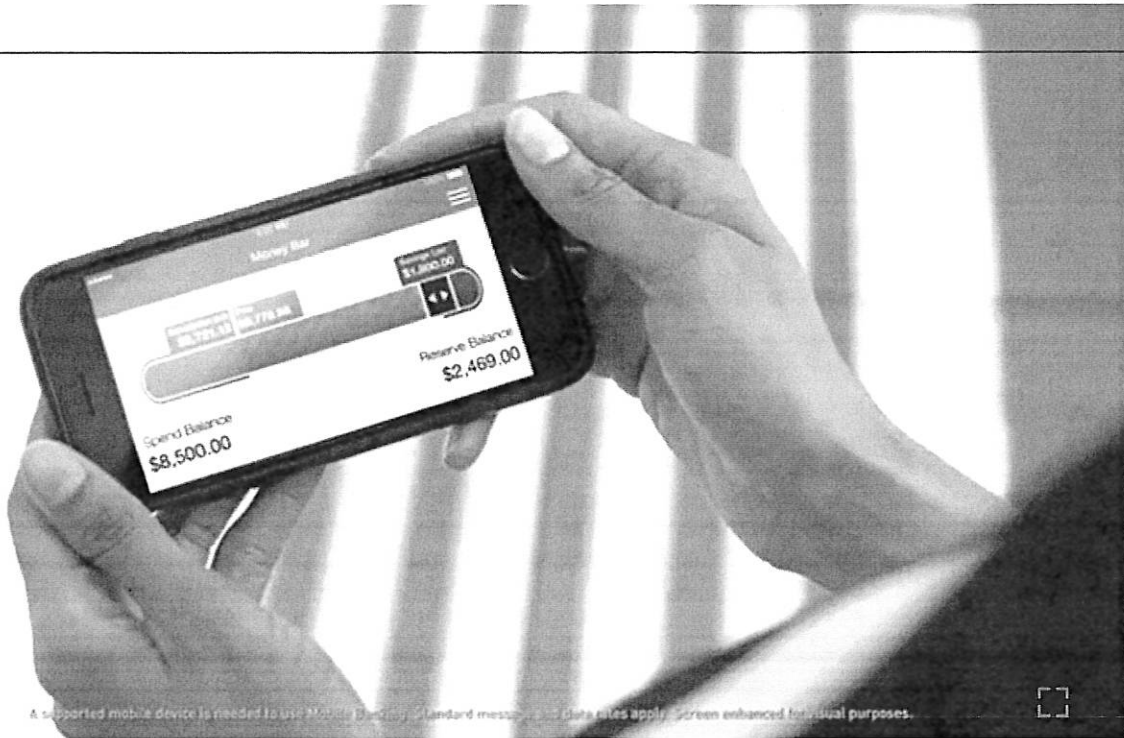
Trump: 'The opioid crisis is an emergency'

By **Wayne Drash and Dan Merica, CNN**

Updated 1:43 AM ET, Fri August 11, 2017

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Trump: Opioid crisis is national emergency 00:45

**Story highlights**

President has declared the opioid crisis a national emergency

Health and Human Services secretary had suggested declaration was unnecessary

Administration to use all appropriate emergency and other authorities to respond to the crisis caused by the opioid epidemic."

"The opioid crisis is an emergency, and I am saying, officially, right now, it is an emergency. It's a national emergency," Trump said earlier at his golf club in Bedminster, New Jersey. "We're going to spend a lot of time, a lot of effort and a lot of money on the opioid crisis. It is a serious problem the likes of which we have never had."

Trump's actions come just two days after Health and Human Services Secretary Tom Price suggested declaring a national emergency was unnecessary.

**(CNN)** — President Donald Trump declared the opioid crisis a national emergency Thursday, a designation that would offer states and federal agencies more resources and power to combat the epidemic.

In a statement released late Thursday, the White House said, "building upon the recommendations in the interim report from the President's Commission on Combating Drug Addiction and the Opioid Crisis, President Donald J. Trump has instructed his

"We believe that at this point, the resources that we need or the focus that we need to bring to bear to the opioid crisis can be addressed without the declaration of an emergency," Price said, although all things are on the table for the president."



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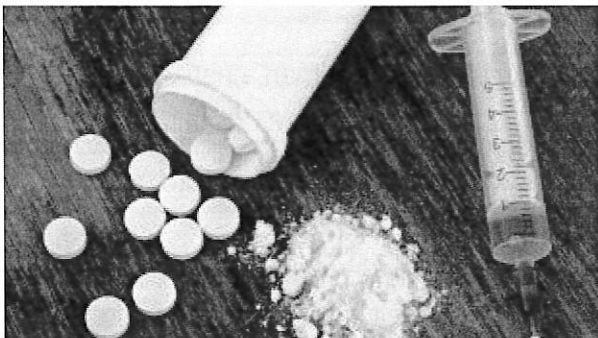
providers are aware of the potential for misuse and abuse of prescription opioids by enhancing prevention efforts at medical and dental schools.

It was not immediately clear what had changed since Tuesday, when Price said the president had no immediate plans for an emergency declaration. In a statement issued Thursday night, Price thanked the President for his leadership in making the move and said it, "demonstrates our sense of urgency to fight the scourge of addiction that is affecting all corners of this country."

Christie lauded the president's decision, saying Trump "deserves great credit."

"As I have said before, I am completely confident that the president will address this problem aggressively and do all he can to alleviate the suffering and loss of scores of families in every corner of our country," he said in a written statement.

Since 1999, the number of American overdose deaths involving opioids has quadrupled, according to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. From 2000 to 2015, more than 500,000 people died of drug overdoses, and opioids account for the majority of those. New government data show an increase in opioid overdose deaths during the first three quarters of last year, an indication that efforts to curb the epidemic are not working.



The White House commission examining the nation's opioid epidemic had told Trump last week that declaring a national public health emergency would be an immediate help in combating the ongoing crisis.

"Our citizens are dying. We must act boldly to stop it," the commission, headed by New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, said in its interim report. "The first and most urgent recommendation of this Commission is direct and completely within your control. Declare a national emergency."

Among the other recommendations were to rapidly increase treatment capacity for those who need substance abuse help; to establish and fund better access to medication-assisted treatment programs; and to make sure that health care

Trump made fighting opioid abuse a key plank of his platform during his 2016 campaign, especially in states ravaged by the heroin and prescription drug abuse. "I just want to let the people of New Hampshire know that I'm with you 1,000%," Trump said in that state just before Election Day. He later promised to help people who "are so seriously addicted."

Declaring a public health emergency makes the opioid epidemic the government's top priority,

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infusing much-needed cash into hard-hit areas and bolstering resources.

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CNN chief medical correspondent Dr. Sanjay Gupta said "the question will be: Will that money

be used to increase hospital bed availability, medically assisted therapy for the millions of people currently addicted and widely available naloxone to prevent overdose deaths?"

Naloxone is the opioid antidote used by first responders to save lives.

Sen. Rob Portman, R-Ohio, who has fought for better access to treatment, said he was pleased with the president's decision. "We must continue to fully fund important programs on prevention, treatment and recovery."

On Twitter, former Congressman Patrick Kennedy, who serves on the bipartisan opioid commission, said the announcement would "empower Congress and the Administration to take bold steps to fund desperately-needed treatment and prevention efforts."



**Patrick J. Kennedy**

1 min · 🌐

I applaud President Trump for declaring a state of emergency on the opioid crisis. This action, which was a key part of my recommendations to the Commission on Combating Drug Addiction and the Opioid Crisis, will empower Congress and the Administration to take bold steps to fund desperately-needed prevention and treatment efforts.

This declaration is only one of many steps we must take on the federal level to reduce the death toll and help people achieve long-term recovery — but it's a start. I'm committed to working with the President and my fellow commissioners to end the opioid overdose epidemic.



**Patrick J. Kennedy**

@PJK4brainhealth

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I applaud @POTUS for declaring a state of emergency on the #opioidcrisis—an important first step. wapo.st/2hNOzOe

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It is not often that a public health emergency is declared for something other than a natural disaster. The Department of Health and Human Services declared one in Puerto Rico last year after more than 10,000 Zika cases were reported there. Before that, the last emergency declaration, unrelated to a natural disaster, was during the 2009-10 flu season, when there was widespread concern over a potential pandemic.

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Dr. Arthur Reingold, a professor of epidemiology at the University of California-Berkeley, worked with the World Health Organization on helping stockpile

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vaccines during the H1N1 pandemic in 2009. It was that type of global initiative that helped curb the spread of bird flu.

The crucial thing an emergency declaration does, he said, is mobilize resources and bring much-needed attention to the problem, especially in getting politicians, leaders and the public on the same page.

"Typically, humans don't get motivated until there's actually a problem," Reingold said. "In this case, this is a problem that has been festering for some time -- and now we're finally paying attention to it."



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