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| January 16, 2018 | | |
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|  | Dear Mr. Malinowski,  Thank you for reaching out to me to express your concern about the opioid crisis.  I agree with you about the importance of this public health crisis. The opioid epidemic touches every community in our country. About 2 million Americans have a substance use disorder involving opioid-based prescription pain relievers and 591,000 have a substance use disorder involving heroin.   In 2016, 1,925 Californians died from opioid overdoses, and available data indicates there will be a higher number of deaths in 2017. This administration and Congress must treat opioid abuse as a public health crisis. We need more funding to combat the opioid epidemic that is threatening millions.  I have been spent years combating the opioid epidemic. As Attorney General of California, I launched CURES 2.0, a state-of-the-art overhaul of California’s prescription drug monitoring program that allows health providers and pharmacists to more effectively flag at-risk patients and curb prescription drug abuse. I also joined 34 other states and the District of Columbia in filing a lawsuit against pharmaceutical companies that allegedly engaged in a scheme to block competition for suboxone, an opioid addiction treatment.  We must take swift action to combat the opioid epidemic that impacts families across our nation.   As a member of the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, I am investigating whether a big pharma company tried to limit access to affordable and reliable treatments for opioid addiction. We are at the height of a crisis and we must make sure that drug companies do not take advantage of pain in order to profit.  Again, thank you for writing. If you have additional questions or concerns, please don’t hesitate to contact my Washington, D.C. office at (202) 224-3553.  Sincerely,  Kamala D. Harris United States Senator |  |