

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4802

July 15, 2011

The Honorable Gil Kerlikowske
The White House Office of National Drug Control Policy
750 Seventeenth Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20503

Dear Director Kerlikowske,

During your tenure as our nation's drug control chief, you have turned a new chapter in the country's approach to eradicating drug abuse and diversion, by placing a consistent and concerted focus on programs rooted in science, prevention, and treatment. Thank you again for your leadership and keen attention to West Virginia priorities.

I deeply appreciate the time you spent in West Virginia earlier this year at the roundtable I held to discuss the impact of prescription drug abuse on families and children. I am also grateful for the time you spent traveling the state to get a full view of this issue. The Administration's commitment of resources to this problem through implementation of the National Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention Action Plan is very encouraging, and I look forward to continuing our collective efforts to enact comprehensive prescription drug abuse and treatment legislation.

I wholeheartedly endorse a robust federal investment in drug control and monitoring initiatives, including the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTA) program. In fact, I made a request to the Senate Appropriations Committee for \$39 million above the President's requested level for the HIDTA program in FY 2012 and for \$72 million above the request for Office of Drug Control Policy programs, including the implementation of the President's Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention Action Plan. Prescription drug abuse is hurting West Virginia families, and I will continue to fight this deeply devastating epidemic through legislation, funding requests, and all available resources at the federal level.

As you know, eradicating this epidemic will take the combined efforts of the federal government, state governments, and local governments, which is why I was pleased to learn of the recent designation of two additional West Virginia counties – Putnam and Mercer – to the Appalachia HIDTA program. I applaud the White House for taking note of this problem and opening up additional resources to help West Virginia. The Appalachia HIDTA program, which has an outstanding staff and broad array of community partners, is clearly an effective partner in this effort. As just one example of the Appalachia HIDTA's success, in 2009 the program was responsible for the removal of more than 8,000 doses of oxycodone and hydrocodone in West Virginia. In the months ahead, I look forward to learning more about the outcomes of the Appalachia HIDTA program's work in the two newly designated counties as well as its ongoing work in existing HIDTA counties.

I also wanted to bring to your attention the growing level of concern about the continued rise in prescription drug abuse among residents of Wyoming County, West Virginia. Wyoming

The Honorable Gil Kerlikowske

July 15, 2011

Page 2

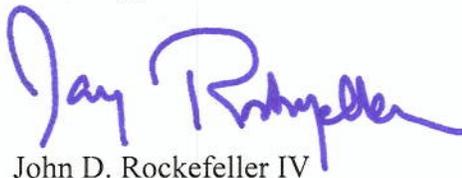
County has one of the nation's highest per capita drug-related death rates and is unfortunately at the nexus of prescription drug diversion in southern West Virginia. I have spoken with local leaders and share their desire to seek designation for Wyoming County under the Appalachia HIDTA program, if the county meets eligibility criteria. In order to most effectively respond to and address the needs of Wyoming County residents, I would like to have a more complete understanding of the HIDTA designation process.

Specifically, I seek your responses to the following questions in writing, and I would also like to request a HIDTA briefing to discuss each of these questions in greater detail.

- Are there West Virginia counties currently not being served by the Appalachia HIDTA program that are candidates for potential designation and/or resource allocations? If so, which West Virginia counties are currently under consideration?
- What is the criteria for HIDTA county designation? Does Wyoming County, West Virginia, meet HIDTA county designation criteria?
- When will the next round of HIDTA county petitions be considered?
- What are the steps a county must take to apply for HIDTA designation?
- What technical assistance can the Office of National Drug Control Policy and the Appalachia HIDTA program offer to Wyoming County, West Virginia, or other counties seeking to pursue HIDTA designation?
- Once a county receives designation under the HIDTA program, what resources specifically become available to the county for drug abuse and diversion efforts?

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter. I look forward to continuing our joint efforts to fight against prescription drug abuse and diversion in West Virginia and throughout the country.

Sincerely,



John D. Rockefeller IV

cc: Mr. Kenneth Burner, Deputy Director, Appalachia HIDTA