NVHR Statement on Favorable Report of the “Restoring Hope for Mental Health and Well-Being Act of 2022” (H.R. 7666) by the House Committee on Energy & Commerce

“NVHR will continue to work with Congress and our network to build a better understanding of how to address the unmet needs of people who use drugs through sound harm reduction strategies.”

May 20, 2022 By NVHR

The National Viral Hepatitis Roundtable (NVHR), a national coalition working to eliminate viral hepatitis, today released the following statement from Director of Policy Daniel Raymond on the vote by the House Committee on Energy and Commerce to advance the “Restoring Hope for Mental Health and Well-Being Act of 2022” (H.R. 7666):

“NVHR applauds Chairman Pallone, Jr., Ranking Member McMorris Rodgers, and the entire House Committee on Energy & Commerce on the passage of H.R. 7666 out of the full committee. The legislation, which reauthorizes the Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant (to be renamed the Substance Use Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery Services Block Grant), is a meaningful and tangible step towards addressing the

substance use and viral hepatitis syndemic. Provisions for substance use disorder treatment programs receiving block grant funds ensure access to viral hepatitis screening, vaccination and treatment is critical to eliminating viral hepatitis in the United States.

“We are also pleased to see the Mainstream Addiction Treatment (MAT) Act included as an amendment to the bill. This bipartisan legislation will foster equitable access to the live-saving medication buprenorphine, reduce stigma around drug use disorder, and advance both overdose prevention and viral hepatitis goals. The opioid overdose epidemic continues to affect millions of Americans – this legislation will save lives by removing barriers to prescribing effective treatment to those who need it the most.

“NVHR will continue to work with Congress and our network to build a better understanding of how to address the unmet needs of people who use drugs through sound harm reduction strategies. Harm reduction has historically garnered broad and bipartisan support among Congress and across the country, due to

its unique effectiveness in preventing fatal overdoses, reducing transmission of HIV and viral hepatitis, and connecting people to care, treatment, and support. While we express our strong disappointment at the inclusion of a new funding restriction targeting safer smoking supplies, we urge Congress and the Administration to build a unified federal response to the substance use and viral hepatitis syndemic, which includes support for robust harm reduction policies."

For more information about viral hepatitis and the need for a stronger public health response to rising hepatitis rates, please visit www.nvhr.org.

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