



# Appropriations Law Builds Upon VA's Success Reducing Opioid Prescriptions

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*Law Signed by President Trump on Friday Includes New Funding and Requirements to Protect Veterans from Opioid Addiction*

STEVENS POINT, WISCONSIN, USA, December 21, 2019 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The [Jason Simcakoski "Simmy" Foundation, Inc.](#) applauded the passage of a bipartisan spending measure this week by both the House and Senate that includes increased funding for veteran opioid safety and further strengthens the implementation of the Jason Simcakoski Memorial and Promise Act (Jason's Law). The comprehensive spending deal was approved by majorities in the House and Senate and signed into law by President Trump on Friday. The spending package contained over \$56M of funding for Jason's Law to improve opioid safety, including reducing prescriptions, to better support veterans' mental health.

The Foundation praised the bipartisan leadership in Congress that led to this important funding. In addition to funding, U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin (WI) added language to the measure that, while recognizing progress made by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), called upon the agency to continue exercising diligence to fully implement all provisions of Jason's Law.

"The Simmy Foundation recognizes Senator Baldwin's continuing efforts to help veterans in Wisconsin, and around the country," said Mavin Simcakoski, Board Chair of the Simmy Foundation. "Legislative leaders from both sides of the aisle have worked together to support Jason's Law in order to improve veteran's mental health care through opioid safety."

The Simmy Foundation is the nation's first organization dedicated to the guarantee of high-quality mental health care services for all veterans in need. Many veterans suffer from service-related post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and other conditions with great consequence. According to the Government Accountability Office (GAO), veterans are 50% more likely to die of an opioid overdose than the general population. The Simmy Foundation supports programs and policies like Jason's Law to increase opioid safety, reduce prescriptions, and provide more effective mental health services.

Key language relating to Jason's Law in the legislation:

- Requires that VA Patient Advocates vigorously represent veterans' interests;
- Ensures the VA has adopted five recommendations made by the United States GAO for opioid safety;
- Extends opioid safety measures to VA community care programs; and
- Ensures that VA healthcare providers meet high healthcare standards.

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