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August 26, 2025

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President,

I write to request that you lower flags to half-staff on August 31, 2025, in observance of International Overdose Awareness Day and in remembrance of the millions of American lives lost to the overdose crisis.

The flag code states that the "United States flag flies at half-staff or at half-mast when the nation or a state is in mourning." Given the number of American lives claimed by the overdose crisis, and the ongoing tragedy of rising overdose rates nationwide, there is no question that this country is in mourning.

More than one million Americans have lost their lives to overdose since 1999, and the devastating consequences of the overdose crisis can be seen in nearly every community across the country. In Massachusetts, this national epidemic continues to cause tremendous loss of life and ongoing trauma in our communities. Over the past decade, our state has been shaped by the heartbreaking loss of nearly 20,000 people—parents, children, friends, loved ones—who have died from overdoses. In 2024 alone, we lost an estimated 1,341 residents to overdose.

International Overdose Awareness Day is recognized annually on August 31 to mark these significant losses and recognize the pain of families, friends and communities impacted by this public health crisis. By lowering flags in remembrance of these individuals, we can both honor their memories and translate grief into action.

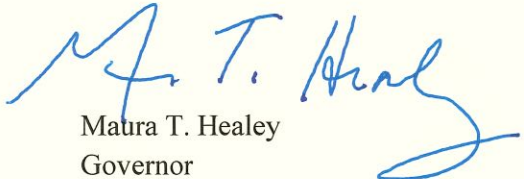
Overdose deaths are preventable, especially as access to addiction prevention, treatment, and harm reduction tools continue to improve across the nation. Yet harmful stigmas often prevent people from seeking the support they need, putting them at greater likelihood of a fatal overdose.

International Overdose Awareness Day presents an opportunity to fight stigma and raise awareness of this public health crisis. By publicly challenging stigmas that treat substance use disorder as a personal choice, as opposed to a medical diagnosis, we can help encourage a greater number of Americans struggling with substance use disorders to seek support and hopefully enter recovery.

This request transcends political divisions; it is about honoring the memory of those lost and supporting the millions of families impacted. We, as public officials, have a moral imperative to engage in public remembrance of those impacted by the overdose crisis—to honor the lives lost, to support their families and loved ones, and to prevent further devastation.

I respectfully urge you to order flags lowered to half-staff on August 31, 2025. This simple but powerful act will honor the lives lost and strengthen our national commitment to ending the overdose crisis.

Very truly yours,



Maura T. Healey
Governor

cc: The Honorable Elizabeth Warren
The Honorable Ed Markey
The Honorable Richard Neal
The Honorable Jim McGovern
The Honorable Lori Trahan
The Honorable Jake Auchincloss
The Honorable Katherine Clark
The Honorable Seth Moulton
The Honorable Ayanna Pressley
The Honorable Stephen Lynch
The Honorable Bill Keating