

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

November 26, 2019

Gary C. Kelly
Chief Executive Officer
Southwest Airlines
2702 Love Field Dr
Dallas TX 75235

Dear Mr. Kelly,

The opioid overdose epidemic has claimed the lives of over 400,000 Americans in the last 20 years, and people across the country have struggled with the loss of family members, friends, and neighbors. Congress, industry, and academia all have a role to play in responding to this public health crisis, and today we call on you to make a small change that can save lives nationwide.

This summer, media outlets reported that an airline passenger died from an overdose while on a flight from Boston to Los Angeles.[1] Coverage of the incident stated that although flight attendants attempted to assist the dying man, they did not have access to an opioid antagonist, such as naloxone, that could have saved his life. This is not the first report of an overdose on an aircraft,[2] and it will not be the last.

Many of us sent a letter to the FAA Administrator in August requesting the mandatory inclusion of naloxone in emergency medical kits. In response to our letter, Administrator Dickson recognized “the need to update emergency medical kits to include opioid antagonists” and stated that “the FAA will seek to encourage the expeditious and voluntary inclusion of opioid antagonists in the [medical] kits.” Several air carriers, including American Airlines, Delta Air Lines, United Airlines, Alaska Airlines, Frontier Airlines,[3] have voluntarily agreed to stock opioid antagonists on their planes.

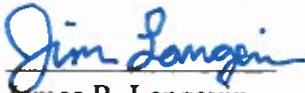
[1] <https://www.miamiherald.com/news/nation-world/national/article232744657.html>

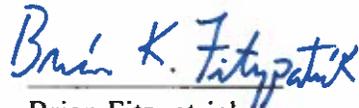
[2] <https://www.vox.com/science-and-health/2018/2/12/16846242/naloxone-opioid-heroin-fentanyl-epidemic>

[3] <https://www.bizjournals.com/atlanta/news/2019/07/18/delta-adding-overdose-reversal-drug-on-planes-to.html>;
<https://www.11alive.com/article/news/health/narcan-on-planes-emergency-medical-kits/85-71ccd631-7c31-47a0-8451-3cddb1b8fe32>

We now urge you to immediately begin stocking opioid antagonists on all flights as part of the emergency medical kits you are already required to have on board. An individual's chance of surviving an opioid overdose should not depend on which air carrier he or she chooses.

Sincerely,


James R. Langevin
Member of Congress


Brian Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress


David Trone
Member of Congress


David B. McKinley
Member of Congress


Donna Shalala
Member of Congress


Andy Levin
Member of Congress


Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress


Andre Carson
Member of Congress