

## **COMBATTING OPIOID ADDICTION**

WHEREAS, the abuse of opioid drugs (e.g., heroin, fentanyl, codeine, and morphine) has become a serious national crisis that negatively impacts the public health as well as the social and economic welfare of our country; and

WHEREAS, according to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, more than 130 people in the United States die every day after overdosing on opioids; and

WHEREAS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that the total “economic burden” of prescription opioid misuse alone in the United States is \$78.5 billion a year, including the costs of health care, lost productivity, addiction treatment and criminal justice involvement; and

WHEREAS, in 2017, more than 47,000 Americans died as a result of an opioid overdose. That same year, an estimated 1.7 million people in this nation suffered from substance abuse disorders related to prescription opioid pain relievers; and

WHEREAS, increases in opioid misuse during pregnancies has caused a rise in the incidence of neonatal abstinence syndrome; and

WHEREAS, the abuse and misuse of opioids present a clear and present danger to the safety of our workplaces and the well-being of our fellow workers.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED the membership of OPEIU hereby expresses its grave concern with the plague of opioid abuse, misuse and addiction that has negatively impacted the American worker in most of our nation’s industries and government agencies; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that OPEIU urges its local unions to work with their management counterparts through labor-management cooperative initiatives and collective bargaining to improve access to treatment and recovery

services, to strengthen workplace educational programs about the dangers of opioid usage and to ensure employer-provided health plans include provisions to cover the costs of opioid addiction treatment and overdose-reversing drugs.

RESOLUTION ADOPTED JUNE 2019