WHEREAS, states and communities across the nation are overwhelmed by the current epidemic of opioid abuse and addiction and they are struggling to respond and to ameliorate the problem; and

WHEREAS, the number of drug overdose deaths in 2014 exceeded the number of deaths due to traffic accidents; and

WHEREAS, over 47,000 Americans died in 2014 from drug overdoses; 28,000 of those deaths were from opioid drugs of all types and 18,000 of those deaths from prescription opioid drugs; and

WHEREAS, first responders are increasingly called upon to respond to drug overdoses, often administering naloxone, a medication used to block or reverse the effects of opioid medication, including extreme drowsiness, slowed breathing, or loss of consciousness but often no data records these encounters; and

WHEREAS, the number of infants born to mothers who have abused opioid drugs during their pregnancies has increased three-fold in the last 15 years according to the Centers for Disease Prevention and Control, resulting in significant health care costs to state Medicaid programs, yet only 28 states have publicly available data on these infants; and

WHEREAS, evidence-based treatment services are in short supply in nearly all states and localities and often first responders, law enforcement, and other referral agents do not know the location of treatment services and the proper referral processes; and

WHEREAS, the service systems that respond to increased drug usage and abuse are a mix of local and state services who may not share information; and

WHEREAS, prescription drug monitoring programs in 49 states collect data on the prescription of certain drugs, however, the data collection varies from state to state, the ability of states to share data varies, and the usefulness of state data to document the extent of the substance abuse problem as well as to document improvements due to service system expansion and reform also vary; and

WHEREAS, communities and states continue to struggle to build a rational, sufficient and efficient system to combat opioid drug abuse in the absence of systematic data collection, aggregation and analysis.
NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that The Council of State Governments requests that the Congress and the federal Executive Branch provide state and local governments adequate resources to facilitate systematic data collection, aggregation and analysis of data relating to opioid drug abuse; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that The Council of State Governments recommends that state and local agencies develop policies and protocols to collect and share on an intrastate basis relevant data relating to opioid drug abuse; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that The Council of State Governments recommends that states review their prescription drug monitoring programs and adopt policies that actualize full interstate cooperation.

Adopted by The Council of State Governments’ Executive Committee this 11th Day of December, 2016 in Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia.