

Angela Kennecke
CEO/Founder, Emily's Hope
221 S. Phillips Ave.
Ste. 203
Sioux Falls, SD 57104
angela@emilyshope.charity
605-359-2077



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To Whom It May Concern,

On behalf of Emily's Hope, I am writing to voice our strong support for the Midwest High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) program and our concern over the proposed \$100 million cut in HIDTA funding included in the White House's FY2026 budget. Midwest HIDTA has been an invaluable partner in our efforts to prevent substance use and save lives in South Dakota.

As a public health nonprofit on the front lines of the overdose crisis, we have directly benefited from HIDTA's collaboration, data tools, and support for multi-sector partnerships. Their leadership has helped us bridge the gap between public health and public safety, especially through tools like ODMAP that allow us to respond quickly and effectively to local overdose outbreaks.

What makes HIDTA unique is its position under the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), where it can serve as a neutral convener and coordinate a balanced, evidence-based response to drug trafficking and overdose. Transferring oversight to the Department of Justice would risk narrowing HIDTA's scope and diminishing the critical public health collaborations that are central to its success.

A 35% cut to the Midwest HIDTA budget would be devastating for communities like ours. It would mean fewer resources to address fentanyl trafficking, less support for rural overdose response efforts, and the unraveling of partnerships that take years to build. In South Dakota, we simply don't have alternative federal resources to fill that gap.

We urge continued investment in HIDTA and support for keeping the program under ONDCP's leadership. Cutting funding at a time when overdose deaths remain so high would only set us back. We need to move forward—together—with proven strategies and strong partnerships like the one we have with Midwest HIDTA.

Sincerely,

Angela Kennecke