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| May 23, 2018 | 202-224-6244 |

**Heller Helps Introduce Bill to Support Treatment for Babies Exposed to Opioids**

*Bipartisan Bill would Provide Greater Support to Treat Babies Exposed to Opioids with No Additional Cost to Taxpayers*

**WASHINGTON**– U.S. Senator Dean Heller (R-NV) today joined a group of seven Senators to help introduce bipartisan legislation that will be considered by the Senate Finance Committee to aid newborns suffering from withdrawal recover in the best care setting and provide support for their families. The *Caring Recovery for Infants and Babies (CRIB) Act* would allow Medicaid to cover health care services provided to infants in residential pediatric recovery facilities in addition to hospitals.

Similar to theearlier version of the *CRIB Act*the Senators introduced at this time last year, the latest version of this legislation would clarify that babies receiving services in residential pediatric recovery centers can continue to receive services after one year of age, and provide for activities to encourage caregiver-infant bonding.

“One of the most distressing and heartbreaking aspects of the opioid epidemic is the fact that every 25 minutes a baby is born with neonatal abstinence syndrome. Congress can step in to ensure that newborns suffering from withdrawal have access to treatment,” **said Heller.**“I’m proud to join my colleagues in introducing the bipartisan CRIB Act, which will help babies suffering from addiction recover.”

Studies show that cases of neonatal abstinence syndrome (NAS) have tripled over the past decade. NAS is a withdrawal condition often caused by use of opioids and other addictive substances in pregnant women. Babies with NAS are usually treated in the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU), where treatment costs can be more than five times the cost of treating other newborns. With the bright lights and loud noises, the NICU is not always the best place for newborns suffering from withdrawal. Residential pediatric recovery facilities, an alternative setting to a NICU, offer specialized care and an environment conducive to treating newborns with NAS, as well as counseling for mothers and families that emphasizes caregiver-infant bonding.

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