

MOVE CURSOR TO 33:19 (THROUGH 38:15) FOR OUR Q&A

<https://www.c-span.org/video/?434514-1/representative-tim-ryan-discusses-opioid-crisis-mental-health-care>

**C-SPAN coverage, National Press Club Headliner/News maker, the opioid epidemic and update on the Affordable Care Act,** with Rep. Tim Ryan, chair of the Addiction, Treatment, and Prevention Caucus, and health care/treatment experts

Question (Bob Weiner):

HELLO, BOB WEINER, MEMBER OF THE HEADLINERS ORGANIZING GROUP AT THE PRESS CLUB AND FORMER SPOKESPERSON OF THE WHITE HOUSE NATIONAL DRUG POLICY OFFICE, COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR FOR THE HOUSE NARCOTICS COMMITTEE, AND I WRITE OPEDS... A FEW QUICK QUESTIONS, ESPECIALLY JAMIE TO YOUR PHENOMENAL PANEL, CONGRATULATIONS ON TIMELY EVENT.

TO FOLLOW UP ON WHAT YOU SAID, HOW IS TREATMENT GOING UNDER THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT AND THE PARITY LEGISLATION, IF THAT STAYS. WHY ISN'T IT ENOUGH TO COVER THE GAPS THAT WE HAVE IN TREATMENT? WHY ISN'T IT ENOUGH TO PROVIDE THE TREATMENT WITH THE SAME -- PARITY -- FOR MENTAL AND DRUG ABUSE AS PHYSICAL HEALTH? SECOND, WHAT ABOUT LEGALIZATION IN THE CULTURE? IS THAT ONE OF THE REASONS WHEN WE THROW THAT OUT THERE AND HALF THE STATES HAVE NOW PUT SOME FORM OF IT TOGETHER? DOES THAT MAKE IT MORE DIFFICULT, JUSTIFYING THE USE OF ALL DRUGS INCLUDING OPIATES?

(Answers, Discussion, and Bob's amplifying questions and follow-on answers follow through 38:15).

If you watch the tape, here are some personal Notes: The panel answer of "it's a matter of enforcement" is the right one on still not getting parity. HHS has never enforced properly or maximally. And note the reluctance to answer on the cultural impact of legalization of marijuana in half the states on using all drugs. I had to force an answer and got partial at best. After, offline, I told Cong. Ryan of MD about Gov. O'Malley's off-record agreement that the car crashes and higher ER numbers in the states with legalization – as now (finally) being reported in Colorado and others—show serious problem with the position, and Democrats are reluctant to point it out openly because so many D votes are youth. Serious political problem, still figuring out needed approach beyond the (to youth and other try-something-new legalizers) unpersuasive line of "science, not medicine, must lead to policy." Also, the panel's line of "California hasn't got data on legalization" is way off because the now years-long "medically" though not yet

recreationally implemented law has been chastised by law enforcement as fraudulent because they say 90% (actually + maybe) of “clinics”-provided “medical” marijuana is to people not actually sick but doctors are signing anything – if the clinics even ask for the doctor-paper. Where the panel did have a point was that a big problem of opioids is over-prescription and diversion of prescriptions. I didn’t force the issue on some of this so as to maintain relationships in the Club and with the panelists—I’m a Kaiser-subscriber in personal health care (concerning the Kaiser VP who was missing the California non-enforcement point), and more importantly, bonded with Cong. Ryan a bit, who got 1/3 of the votes against Pelosi for Leader and could become a D leader soon—offline I told him that was amazing, which it truly was, and he put his arm on my shoulder, said “Thanks!” with a smile, and asked, “SO how is the General”—I told him terrific, on regularly on NBC networks, and he said “I see him on TV.”