Dear _____________________,

Over the past two decades the prevalence of opioid substance use disorders has been rising steadily. The problem is not a single-faceted one, nor did it spin out of control overnight. The harsh reality is individuals from all walks of life have experienced the devastating impact of this epidemic. I know, as a pharmacist and leader in your community, you see this devastation firsthand.

This past year, NCAP has been developing pro-active, streamlined opioid-related programs and resources for all North Carolina pharmacists. The community pharmacist is the most accessible healthcare advocate across our state. We are thankful for the care that you provide; and one of the messages that I constantly preach to non-pharmacy stakeholders is that pharmacists are highly educated but tremendously underutilized. To truly be able to make a dent in this opioid problem, we have got to think out-of-the-box and generate new models of care in order to give our society a chance at a real solution. I truly believe that pharmacists can make a huge difference in the opioid space.

I’m writing to you, specifically, because the county in which you practice has been identified as one of the Top 10 high burden counties for at least one, if not multiple, opioid-related metrics. NCAP has identified your pharmacy as a potential opioid champion for your community and county.

Beginning mid-January, a representative of NCAP will call you to discuss how NCAP can partner with you to help. Here are some topics for consideration during the upcoming call.

1. Are you aware of why your county is considered a high burdened county?
2. What do you currently provide regarding opioid education to your pharmacy team and your surrounding community?
3. What do you currently do regarding harm reduction strategies for your patients?
4. Are you aware that NCAP has created an Advanced Opioid Workshop and is working on developing a Medication Assistance Certificate Training program for pharmacists?

In conclusion, I would like to leave you with two of my personal and professional goals, regarding this work. First, it is important for NCAP to generate and build awareness as to how our state pharmacy association can better help practicing pharmacists; and second, NCAP seeks to elevate the role of the pharmacist for public health initiatives by advancing practice, improving quality of care, and securing payment for services.

We can make a difference together. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Penny Shelton, Executive Director