

U.S. and the Nordic countries. To friendship. *Skål!* Cheers!

[Prime Minister Rasmussen offered a toast.]

President Obama. The dinner is now served. But I think we've just identified the next comic for the White House Correspondents' dinner. [Laughter]

Enjoy, everybody. Thank you!

The President's Weekly Address May 14, 2016

The President. Hi, everybody. I've got a special guest with me this week, Macklemore. Now, for those of you who don't share the same love for hip-hop that I do, he's a Grammy-winning artist, but he is also an advocate who's giving voice to a disease we too often just whisper about: the disease of addiction.

Musician Ben "Macklemore" Haggerty. Hey, everybody. I'm here with President Obama because I take this personally. I abused prescription drugs, and I battled addiction. If I hadn't gotten the help that I needed when I needed it, I definitely would not be here today. And I want to help others facing the same challenges that I did.

The President. Now, drug overdoses now take more lives every year than traffic accidents. Deaths from opioid overdoses have tripled since 2000. A lot of time, they're from legal drugs prescribed by a doctor. So addiction doesn't always start in some dark alley, it often starts in a medicine cabinet. In fact, a new study released this month found that 44 percent of Americans know someone who has been addicted to prescription pain killers.

Macklemore. I didn't just know someone, I lost someone. My friend Kevin overdosed on painkillers when he was just 21 years old. Addiction is like any other disease. It doesn't discriminate. It doesn't care what color you are, whether you're a guy or a girl, rich or poor, whether you live in an inner city, a suburb, or

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:54 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Rep. John R. Lewis. Prime Minister Jóhannsson referred to musician and actor Björk Guðmundsdóttir. Prime Minister Rasmussen referred to musician Lukas Graham Forchhammer; actors Scarlett Johansson, Julia Roberts, Matt Damon, and Uma Thurman; and Karl Rove, former Deputy Chief of Staff and Senior Adviser to President George W. Bush.

rural America. This doesn't just happen to other people's kids or in some other neighborhood. It can happen to any of us.

The President. That's why just talking about this crisis isn't enough. We need to get treatment to more people who need it. My administration is working with communities to reduce overdose deaths, including with medication. We're working with law enforcement to help people get into treatment instead of jail. And under Obamacare, health plans in the marketplace have to include coverage for treatment.

Macklemore. I know recovery isn't easy or quick, but along with the 12-step program, treatment has saved my life. And recovery works. We need our leaders in Washington fund it and for people to know how to find it.

The President. We all need to do more to make that happen. I've asked Congress to expand access to recovery services and to give first responders the tools they need to treat overdoses before it's too late. This week, the House passed several bills about opioids, which is great, but unless they also make investments in more treatment, it won't get Americans the help that they need.

On top of funding, doctors also need more training about the power of pain medication they prescribe and the risks that those pain medications carry. Another way our country can help those suffering in private is to make this conversation public.

* White House note: "Same Love" is the title of Macklemore's hit 2012 song about marriage equality.

Macklemore. When you're going through it, it's hard to imagine there could be anything worse than addiction. But shame and the stigma associated with the disease keeps too many people from seeking the help that they actually need. Addiction isn't a personal choice or a personal failing. And sometimes, it takes more than a strong will to get better; it takes a strong community and accessible resources.

The President. The good news is, there's hope. When we talk about opioid abuse as the public health problem that it is, more people will seek the help that they need. More people will find the strength to recover, just like Macklemore and millions of Americans have. We'll see fewer preventable deaths and fewer broken families.

Macklemore. We have to tell people who need help that it's okay to ask for it. We've got to make sure they know where to get it.

The President. We all have a role to play. Even if we haven't fought this battle in our

own lives, there's a good chance we know someone who has or who is.

Macklemore. President Obama and I just had a powerful conversation here at the White House about opioid abuse and what we can do about it. You can catch it this summer on MTV. And to find treatment in your area, call 1-800-662-HELP.

The President. Thanks, everybody. Thanks, Macklemore.

Macklemore. Thank you.

The President. And have a great weekend.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 3:35 p.m. on May 12 in the Library at the White House for broadcast on May 14. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 13, but was embargoed for release until 6 a.m. on May 14. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Commencement Address at Rutgers University–New Brunswick in Piscataway, New Jersey May 15, 2016

The President. Hello Rutgers! R-U rah-rah! Thank you so much. Thank you. Everybody, please have a seat. Thank you, President Barchi, for that introduction. Let me congratulate my extraordinarily worthy fellow honorary Scarlet Knights, Dr. Burnell and Bill Moyers. Matthew, good job. If you are interested, we can talk after this.

One of the perks of my job is honorary degrees. [Laughter] But I have to tell you, it impresses nobody in my house. [Laughter] Now Malia and Sasha just say: "Okay, Dr. Dad, we'll see you later. Can we have some money?" [Laughter]

To the Board of Governors; to Chairman Brown; to Lieutenant Governor Guadagno; Mayor Cahill; Mayor Wahler, Members of Congress, Rutgers administrators, faculty, staff, friends, and family: Thank you for the honor of joining you for the 250th anniversary of this remarkable institution. But most of all, congratulations to the class of 2016!

Audience members. We love you! [Laughter]

The President. I come here for a simple reason: to finally settle this pork roll vs. Taylor ham question. [Laughter] I'm just kidding. [Laughter] There's not much that I'm afraid to take on in my final year of office, but I know better than to get in the middle of that debate. [Laughter]

The truth is, Rutgers, I came here because you asked. Well, now, it's true that a lot of schools invite me to their commencement every year. But you are the first to launch a 3-year campaign. [Laughter] E-mails, letters, tweets, YouTube videos. I even got three notes from the grandmother of your student body president. [Laughter] And I have to say that really sealed the deal. That was smart, because I have a soft spot for grandmas. [Laughter]

So I'm here, off Exit 9, on the banks of the Old Raritan, at the site of one of the original nine colonial colleges. Winners of the first-ever college football game. One of the newest