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August 23, 2017

The Honorable Brian Fitzpatrick  
United States House of Representatives  
514 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Fitzpatrick:

On behalf of the physician and medical student members of the American Medical Association (AMA), I am writing to express our support for your bill H.R. 2938, the "Road to Recovery Act." This bipartisan legislation would lift the Medicaid Institutions for Mental Diseases (IMD) exclusion to expand access to inpatient treatment for individuals with substance use disorders.

As you know, Medicaid expansion and the required coverage of treatment for substance use disorders under the Affordable Care Act have made access to treatment services available to millions of individuals for whom treatment was previously out of reach. However, even as millions have gained the means to access treatment, the capacity to provide these services remains limited. While strides continue to be made to increase the number of physicians and other providers who can care for these patients in the outpatient setting, the existing IMD exclusion limit on the size of inpatient facilities continues to hamper access to treatment in those settings. The Road to Recovery Act would remove the arbitrary 16 bed limit currently in federal law and cover treatment for individuals less than 65 years of age. The bill would also require periodic review of the need for services every 60 days and allow states to set standards on how to implement care.

The toll of the ongoing opioid epidemic remains substantial, both in lives lost and the cost to society. The Road to Recovery Act has the potential to greatly expand access to medically and scientifically proven treatment options, just as the demand for these services continues to grow. We look forward to working with you to advance this proposal and to continue to explore additional opportunities to preserve and grow access to substance use disorder treatment services.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James L. Madara". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

James L. Madara, MD