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March 6, 2018

The Honorable Debbie Dingell
U.S. House of Representatives
116 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Fred Upton
U.S. House of Representatives
2183 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Dingell and Upton:

On behalf of the physician and medical student members of the American Medical Association (AMA), I am writing to express our support for H.R. 5002, the Advancing Cutting-Edge (ACE) Research Act. This important bipartisan bill would give the National Institutes of Health (NIH) more flexibility to conduct innovative research on new treatments for pain management and opioid use disorder (OUD), thereby providing more tools to address the scourge of the nation's opioid epidemic.

Giving the Director of NIH authority to approve projects, including partnerships with innovative companies, by using "other transaction authority" will allow NIH to more quickly and efficiently move forward on urgently needed research to develop non-opioid pharmacologic alternatives. With 25 million Americans suffering from pain every day, many of whom do not have access to effective treatment, it is critical that alternatives for opioids be developed. In December, NIH Director Francis Collins, MD, PhD noted in testimony before the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor & Pensions that having more flexibility will enable NIH to accelerate the research process with new drug targets that have emerged working with industry.

As the nation's opioid epidemic continues unabated, it is critical that non-opioid pharmacologic alternatives be developed as soon as possible. The AMA applauds your leadership in sponsoring the ACE Research Act, and looks forward to working with you and your colleagues to advance this important legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James L. Madara". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping "J" and "M".

James L. Madara, MD