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June 20, 2018

The Honorable Bruce Rauner  
Governor  
Office of the Governor  
207 State House  
Springfield, IL 62706

Re: American Medical Association **strong support** of mental health and substance use disorder parity legislation: Senate Bill 1707, House Amendment 3

Dear Governor Rauner:

On behalf of the American Medical Association (AMA) and our physician and medical student members, I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 1707, House Amendment 3 (S.B. 1707), a bill that passed with overwhelming bipartisan support. The AMA supports this bill because it will increase patients' access to mental and substance use disorder treatment. This is critical because increasing access to mental and substance use disorder treatment is essential to reversing the state's opioid overdose and death epidemic. We believe there are several key provisions in S.B. 1707 that demonstrate Illinois' leadership, and we urge you to sign this important legislation.

First, S.B. 1707 helps remove administrative barriers that hurt patients' ability to obtain timely care for mental health and substance use disorders. Specifically, the AMA strongly supports removing prior authorization and step therapy requirements when they are not supported by clinical criteria from medical organizations such as the American Society of Addiction Medicine—as noted in the legislation. If a patient needs care but is forced to delay treatment, or have treatment denied, because of prior authorization or step therapy, the consequences can be fatal.

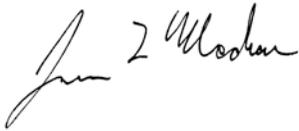
Second, S.B. 1707 increases much-needed transparency and accountability for ensuring patients have access to the coverage benefits they have chosen. Specifically, the AMA strongly supports (1) provisions that require health insurers to submit comparative analyses to the state for the purpose of ensuring compliance with state and federal parity laws; (2) strengthening the state's ability to investigate potential parity violations; and (3) the public's access to the findings and conclusions of those and other investigations.

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Third, this bill sends an important signal to all Illinoisans as well as other states that patients with a mental health or substance use disorder deserve increased support for obtaining evidence-based treatment. Your signature on S.B. 1707 will help reduce stigma, which continues to play a role in the nation's opioid epidemic. Removing barriers to care, as well as evaluating and enforcing strong mental health and substance use disorder parity requirements, will increase the confidence of physicians and patients that Illinois intends to lead the nation when it comes to care for patients with a mental health or substance use disorder. These Illinois patients and their families deserve nothing less.

For the aforementioned reasons, we urge your signature on S.B. 1707. If you have any questions, please contact Daniel Blaney-Koen, JD, Senior Legislative Attorney, Advocacy Resource Center, at [daniel.blaney-koen@ama-assn.org](mailto:daniel.blaney-koen@ama-assn.org) or (312) 464-4954.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "James L. Madara".

James L. Madara, MD

cc: Illinois State Medical Society