



JAMES L. MADARA, MD
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, CEO

ama-assn.org
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June 25, 2020

The Honorable Jared Polis
Governor
State of Colorado
State Capitol Building
200 E. Colfax Avenue, Room 136
Denver, CO 80203

Re: Colorado House Bill 20-1085 - Support

Dear Governor Polis:

On behalf of the American Medical Association (AMA) and our physician and medical student members, I am writing to urge your signature on Colorado House Bill 20-1085 (H.B. 1085)—legislation that would be one of the nation’s first to remove long-standing health insurance company barriers to multidisciplinary, multimodal pain care. The AMA also urges your signature on Colorado Senate Bill 20-007 (S.B. 7)—legislation that would remove barriers to treatment for substance use disorders. Together, these bills are essential to helping Colorado continue its positive momentum in addressing the state’s drug overdose and death epidemic.

We know that Colorado—like all states—is facing unprecedented challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We appreciate the positive steps that Colorado has taken to support physicians and patients, including supporting efforts to increase the ability of patients with pain and substance use disorders to receive care via telemedicine. Your signature on H.B. 1085 and S.B. 7 would provide lasting change essential to help Colorado’s patients and physicians.

The AMA and many other health care and patient organizations have for years urged health insurance companies to increase access to non-opioid pain care options without imposing barriers such as excessive cost sharing, prior authorization or step therapy protocols. Health plans, however, have fought bitterly to maintain the status quo, including keeping co-pays and deductibles for non-opioid pain care at unaffordable levels or on the highest cost-sharing tiers of a formulary.

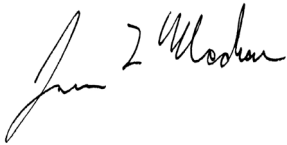
The AMA also has worked in more than a dozen states to enact provisions, such as those in S.B. 7, to increase access to evidence-based medications to help treat opioid use disorder. In some cases, such as Pennsylvania, health insurers voluntarily agreed to remove barriers such as prior authorization and overly restrictive formularies. In other states, such as Maryland, Vermont, Arkansas and Missouri, legislation was required to do the same. Of the 15 states that have laws or agreements similar to S.B. 7, there is no evidence that premiums have increased or that health insurance companies have gone out of business as a result of increased access to care for patients with a substance use disorder.

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Your signature on H.B. 1085 would make Colorado one of the first states in the nation willing to stand up so strongly for patients who need access to non-opioid pain care options. We similarly urge you to sign S.B. 7 and send a strong message to health insurance companies that business as usual during a drug overdose epidemic will not and cannot be tolerated.

If you have any questions, please contact Daniel Blaney-Koen, JD, Senior Legislative Attorney, AMA Advocacy Resource Center, at daniel.blaney-koen@ama-assn.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim L Madara". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

James L. Madara, MD

cc: Colorado Medical Society