

February 25, 2022

The Honorable Karen Fann
President of the Senate
Arizona State Senate
Arizona Capitol Museum
1700 West Washington
Phoenix, AZ 85007-2890

Dear Senator Fann:

On behalf of the American Medical Association (AMA) and our physician and medical student members, I am writing to express concerns with Senate Bill (S.B.) 1016, which would set a lower safety standard for off-label prescribing and inappropriately interfere in the physician-patient-pharmacist therapeutic relationship. The AMA strongly supports this relationship as part of a physician-led team in support of a patient's health and welfare. This includes the physician's diagnosis and treatment plan and the pharmacist's expertise in medication safety. For the reasons explained below, the AMA urges a "No" vote on S.B. 1016.

The AMA strongly supports the autonomous clinical decision-making authority of a physician to prescribe medications for off-label use, but only when an off-label indication is based upon sound scientific evidence or sound medical opinion. The AMA further supports that off-label use be supported by evidence that is independently derived, peer reviewed, scientifically sound, and truthful and not misleading. S.B. 1016 does not meet this standard by saying that all off-label prescriptions must be filled when there is a "documented clinical reason." Medical and scientific evidence is a much higher—and safer—standard.

The AMA also opposes S.B. 1016 because it would interfere in the physician-pharmacist-patient therapeutic relationship. In a well-functioning physician-led team, all health care professionals have important roles and responsibilities. With respect to medication management and patient safety, the physician has an obligation to ensure that if a medication is indicated, its use is backed by medical evidence and science in support of the patient's diagnosis and treatment goals. The pharmacist, in turn, plays an important role in ensuring medication safety and alerting and consulting with the physician if there are any potential concerns. Working together, the physician and pharmacist can use their specific training and expertise for patients' benefit. S.B. 1016, however, essentially removes the pharmacist from the equation, which does not benefit the prescribing physician or the patient.

For the above reasons, the AMA urges a "No" vote on S.B. 1016.

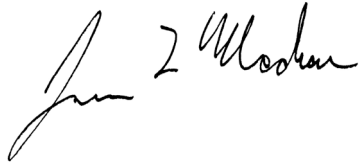
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If you have any questions, please contact Daniel Blaney-Koen JD, Senior Legislative Attorney, Advocacy Resource Center, at daniel.blaney-koen@ama-assn.org or 312-464-4954.

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: Arizona Medical Association
Arizona State Senate