



February 27, 2014

The Honorable Dan Schoen
Minnesota House of Representatives
533 State Office Building
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Re: American Medical Association support for House File 2307, “Steve’s Law,” providing for drug and alcohol overdose prevention and medical assistance

Dear Representative Schoen:

On behalf of the American Medical Association (AMA) and our physician and student members, I am writing in support of House File (H.F.) 2307, which would help increase the availability of naloxone in Minnesota to help save lives from drug overdose. We commend you for your leadership on this important public health issue and stress that the most important reason for the AMA’s support is that naloxone saves lives.

As Minnesota and much of the nation struggles with crafting policies to help combat prescription drug abuse, diversion, overdose and death, the AMA urges that additional national and state focus should be placed on strategies that complement combating diversion and misuse, and include policies that help physicians and other stakeholders to treat overdose and reduce deaths. We support “Steve’s Law” because it will increase the availability of naloxone to those at risk of overdose, to first responders who often are first on the scene to help those who have overdosed, and to persons close to those at risk.

We also support H. F. 2307 because it would add important liability protections to physicians and other health care professionals and first responders who prescribe, administer and make naloxone available for those in need. This is the type of Good Samaritan provision that has proven successful in other states in making naloxone use more common.

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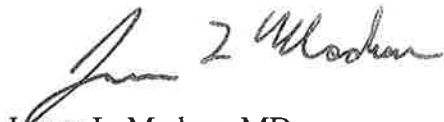
A February 2012 report in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report summarized the findings from 48 community programs that distribute naloxone, finding that 10,171 overdose reversals were achieved.¹ Most recently, USA Today reported a program in Quincy, Massachusetts saved 211 lives when first responders used naloxone.²

Nationally, the AMA has endorsed state legislation to increase availability of naloxone in many states³ as well as to the National Governors Association, the National Conference of Insurance Legislators and elsewhere because naloxone is a safe and effective U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-approved medication that reverses opioid overdose.⁴ The AMA also has expressed its support to the FDA, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

For these reasons, the AMA strongly urges the Minnesota House of Representatives to pass "Steve's Law" and ultimately move it to the governor for his signature. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Daniel Blaney-Koen, JD, Senior Legislative Attorney, Advocacy Resource Center, at daniel.blaney-koen@ama-assn.org or (312) 464-4954.

Thank you for your efforts on this important public health issue.

Sincerely,



James L. Madara, MD

cc: Minnesota Medical Association
Maya A. Babu, MD, MBA

¹ Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (*MMWR*), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Community-Based Opioid Overdose Prevention Programs Providing Naloxone — United States, 2010, February 17, 2012 / 61(06);101-105. Available at http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6106a1.htm?s_cid=mm6106a1_w. Last accessed May 16, 2013.

² Police carry special drug to reverse heroin overdoses, Donna Leinwand Leger, USA Today. January 31, 2014. Available at <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2014/01/30/police-use-narcan-to-reverse-heroin-overdoses/5063587/>

³ See, for example, Colorado Senate Bill 13-014; New Jersey Assembly Bill 3095; and Oklahoma House Bill 1872.

⁴ A comprehensive discussion of AMA policies, including letters to legislators and national organizations, can be found at www.ama-assn.org/go/stopdrugabuse