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The Honorable Randi Becker  
Chair  
Senate Health Care Committee  
466 J.A. Cherberg Building  
Olympia, WA 98504-0466

Re: American Medical Association **support for House Bill 1671** to help reduce death from opioid-related overdose

Dear Chair Becker:

On behalf of the American Medical Association (AMA) and our physician and student members, I am writing in support of Washington House Bill (H.B.) 1671 that seeks to increase the availability of naloxone in Washington to prevent death from the overdose of opioids. The AMA also supports H.B. 1671 for its common sense liability protections for health care professionals and individuals who seek to help another individual at risk for – or who is experiencing an opioid overdose.

The most important reason for the AMA's support is that naloxone saves lives. This is a medication that has no potential for abuse, is easily administered and has broad, national support from physicians and other health professionals who treat patients with substance use disorders, as well as law enforcement and other first responders, who often are the first people on the scene of an overdose. This bill importantly allows for the prescription of naloxone to an individual patient at risk of experiencing an opioid-related overdose as well as a family member, friend or other individual in a position to assist an individual at risk of experiencing an opioid-related overdose.

The AMA has endorsed legislation to increase availability of naloxone in many states<sup>1</sup> and advocated this policy 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 approved medication that reverses opioid overdose and saves lives.<sup>2</sup>

Approximately half of the states in the United States now have laws similar to the provisions in S.B. 1671, and we are advocating that all states have such a law by the end of 2015. If you have any questions, please contact Daniel Blaney-Koen, JD, Senior Legislative Attorney, Advocacy Resource Center, at (312) 464-4954 or [daniel.blaney-koen@ama-assn.org](mailto:daniel.blaney-koen@ama-assn.org).

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

Sincerely,

James L. Madara, MD

cc: Washington State Medical Association

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, laws in [Colorado](#); [New Jersey](#); [Oklahoma](#); [Wisconsin](#); and [Tennessee](#).

<sup>2</sup> A comprehensive discussion of AMA policies, including letters to legislators and national organizations, can be found at [www.ama-assn.org/go/stopdrugabuse](http://www.ama-assn.org/go/stopdrugabuse).