



JAMES L. MADARA, MD  
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January 30, 2017

John Burns, PhD  
Professor  
Department of Behavioral Sciences  
Rush University Medical Center  
1645 W. Jackson Blvd., Suite 400  
Chicago, IL 60612

Re: PCORI Funding Opportunity: *Stepped Care as an Alternative to Opioid Treatment for the Management of Chronic Low Back Pain*

Dear Dr. Burns:

On behalf of the American Medical Association (AMA) and its physician and student members, I am pleased to communicate the AMA's support for research that promotes the understanding and treatment of chronic back pain. Research is integral to the development of the AMA's efforts to ensure comprehensive and appropriate treatment for patients.

According to the Institute of Medicine, chronic pain affects approximately 100 million individuals in the United States. The nation is also in the throes of an opioid-related epidemic that claimed more than 30,000 lives in 2015. As part of the AMA's interest and focus in working to end the nation's opioid-related misuse, diversion and death epidemic, research comparing the effectiveness of multiple treatment modalities, including alternatives to opioids for the treatment of chronic back pain, would greatly benefit patients.

For these reasons, we support randomized trials addressing this topic to help contribute to patient safety and improved clinical outcomes. We will also assist in the dissemination of the research results through appropriate communication with our members, conferences, website and publications. If you have any concerns or 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 black ink that reads "James L. Madara". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "J".

James L. Madara, MD