



April 29, 2014

The Honorable Helena N. Moreno  
Louisiana House of Representatives  
643 Magazine Street  
Suite 302  
New Orleans, LA 70130

Re: American Medical Association support for House Bill 754, which authorizes first responders to carry naloxone

Dear Representative Moreno:

On behalf of the American Medical Association (AMA) and our physician and student members, I am writing in support of House Bill 754, which would help increase the availability of naloxone in Louisiana to help save lives from drug overdose. The AMA strongly supports this type of legislation because it will help save lives.

As Louisiana – 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 be placed on strategies that complement stopping diversion and misuse. This should include policies that help physicians, other health care professionals and first responders to treat overdose and reduce deaths. Increasing the availability of naloxone to first responders – who often are the first ones to help those who have overdosed – will accomplish these important goals.

A February 2012 report in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) “Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report” summarized the findings from 48 community programs that distribute naloxone, finding that 10,171 overdose reversals were achieved.<sup>1</sup> Most recently, *USA Today*

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<sup>1</sup> 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](http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6106a1.htm?s_cid=mm6106a1_w). Last accessed May 16, 2013.

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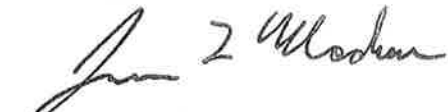
reported a program in Quincy, Massachusetts saved 211 lives when first responders used naloxone.<sup>2</sup>

Nationally, the AMA has endorsed state legislation to increase availability of naloxone in many states<sup>3</sup> 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.<sup>4</sup> The AMA also has expressed its support to the FDA, CDC and the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

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](mailto: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: Louisiana State Medical Society

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<sup>2</sup> 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/>

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

<sup>4</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)