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February 7, 2016

The Honorable Frank Garner  
Montana House of Representatives  
P.O. Box 200400  
Helena, MT 59620-0400

Re: American Medical Association **strong support for House Bill 333**, “An Act Adopting the Help Save Lives from Overdose”

Dear Representative Garner:

On behalf of the American Medical Association (AMA) and our physician and student members, I am writing in strong support of House Bill (HB) 333 that – when enacted – will save lives in Montana from opioid-related overdose. The AMA strongly supports this bill’s focus to broadly increase access to naloxone among first responders, community public health organizations and by physicians and other health care professionals. Further, we support this bill’s inclusion of important education provisions for lay persons to ensure that they can recognize signs of overdose and help those experiencing an overdose.

The most important reason for the AMA’s support is that the provisions in HB 333 have been enacted and implemented in more than 40 states, and the evidence is unequivocal that it saves lives. Moreover, HB 333 would be one of the most comprehensive pieces of legislation in the country by including authority for the states to pursue grants as well as standing orders for your state medical officer to prescribe naloxone on a statewide basis. This authority has been instrumental in ensuring that family members, first responders and harm reduction organizations have access to this life-saving drug.

The AMA further supports the common sense Good Samaritan provisions in HB 333. During an overdose event, the person suffering the overdose needs immediate medical attention, which sometimes includes the immediate administration of naloxone or other life-saving medication. By providing key civil and criminal protections, this legislation will help those who are experiencing an overdose, bystanders who seek help, and health care professionals who administer care. And most important, it sends a clear message to all Montanans that they do not have to fear reprisals or civil penalties for helping save a life from overdose. The AMA commends your leadership on this issue. If you have any 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,

James L. Madara, MD

cc: Montana Medical Association