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June 30, 2014

Steve Japinga  
Chief of Public Policy and Legislative Affairs  
Michigan State Medical Society  
120 West Saginaw Street  
East Lansing, MI 48823

Re: American Medical Association **support for increased access to naloxone** to help reduce death from overdose

Dear Steve:

On behalf of the American Medical Association (AMA) and our physician and student members, I am writing in support of the bills currently under consideration in the Michigan House and Senate that seek to increase the availability of naloxone in Michigan to prevent death from the overdose of opioids. These include House Bill (H.B.) 5407, H.B. 5604, Senate Bill (S.B.) 721, S.B. 857 and S.B. 860.

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, substance abuse professionals, law enforcement and other first responders, who often are the first people on the scene of an overdose.

Collectively, these bills have the AMA's support because they would allow for the prescription of naloxone to an individual patient at risk of experiencing an opioid-related overdose; a family member, friend or other individual in a position to assist an individual at risk of experiencing an opioid-related overdose. The AMA also supports the provisions that call for increased availability of naloxone and training for first responders as well as provisions that provide for immunity from civil liability for the good faith prescribing, dispensing, possession and administration of naloxone by health professionals, first responders and others.

In addition, the AMA supports the provision to require a yearly report on the number, trends, patterns and risk factors related to opioid-related overdose fatalities that occurred in this state in the preceding calendar year. This will help the state understand the risks and guide future substance abuse treatment and prevention efforts – key to helping stop the incredible damage that substance abuse and addiction has brought to Michigan and many other states.

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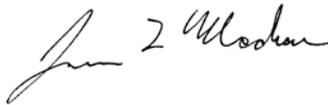
Nationally, the AMA has endorsed state legislation to increase availability of naloxone in many states<sup>1</sup> as well as to the National Governors Association, the National Conference of Insurance Legislators and elsewhere because naloxone is a safe and effective U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-approved medication that reverses opioid overdose.<sup>2</sup> The AMA also has expressed its support to the FDA, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

A February 2012 report in the CDC's *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* summarized the findings from 48 community programs that distribute naloxone, finding that 10,171 overdose reversals were achieved.<sup>3</sup> *USA Today* has reported a program in Quincy, Massachusetts saved 211 lives when first responders administered naloxone.<sup>4</sup> More recently, New Jersey law enforcement in Ocean County have helped reverse 34 overdoses in 2014, according to the Ocean County Prosecutor's Office.<sup>5</sup>

The bottom line is that the AMA supports the legislation noted above because these bills will play an important role in helping save the lives of Michigan citizens. 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 efforts on this important public health issue.

Sincerely,



James L. Madara, MD

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, new 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)

<sup>3</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.

<sup>4</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>5</sup> Monmouth County police departments receive Narcan, Ashley Peskoe, NJ.com, June 5, 2014. Available at [http://www.nj.com/monmouth/index.ssf/2014/06/monmouth\\_county\\_police\\_departments\\_receive\\_narcan.html](http://www.nj.com/monmouth/index.ssf/2014/06/monmouth_county_police_departments_receive_narcan.html)