



JAMES L. MADARA, MD
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, CEO

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June 22, 2015

State of Rhode Island General Assembly
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

Re: American Medical Association **support for increasing Good Samaritan protections** to help save lives from overdose

Dear Members of the Rhode Island Senate and General Assembly:

On behalf of the American Medical Association (AMA) and our physician and student members, I am writing in support of Senate Bill 576 Substitute A (S.B. 576-A) and House Bill 5416 (H.B. 5416), that would enhance existing Good Samaritan protections in Rhode Island as well as remove sunset provisions to existing law. The AMA strongly supports providing Good Samaritan protections to those who seek aid for someone experiencing an overdose because such provisions will help save lives.

Specifically, the AMA supports the position that a person acting in good faith who seeks medical assistance for another person who is experiencing a drug-related overdose should not be arrested, charged or prosecuted for the possession, sharing, or use of a controlled substance, or possession of drug paraphernalia. Furthermore, a person's pretrial release, probation, furlough, supervised release, or parole should not be revoked when a person acts as a Good Samaritan for someone experiencing an overdose.

Rhode Island has shown great leadership in many areas of public policy in seeking to reduce the state's opioid misuse and overdose epidemic. The state's naloxone access policies are among the most comprehensive in the nation. By supporting the increased Good Samaritan protections in S.B. 576-A and H.B. 5416, and ensuring that there are no sunset provisions limiting the duration of those protections, Rhode Island will – again – demonstrate excellent public policy leadership for the rest of the nation.

If you have any questions, please contact Daniel Blaney-Koen, JD, Senior Legislative Attorney, Advocacy Resource Center, at daniel.blaney-koen@ama-assn.org, or (312) 464-4954.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James L. Madara". The signature is written in a cursive style.

James L. Madara, MD

cc: Rhode Island Medical Society