



June 10, 2014

The Honorable Michael A. Barbieri
Chair
House Health & Human Development Committee
The Honorable Bethany A. Hall-Long
Delaware General Assembly
411 Legislative Avenue
Dover, DE 19901

Re: American Medical Association **support for Senate Bill 219**, an Act that will increase community access to naloxone to help reduce death from overdose

Dear Chairman Barbieri and Senator Hall-Long:

On behalf of the American Medical Association (AMA) and our physician and student members, I am writing in **support of Senate Bill (S.B.) 219**, which seeks to increase the availability of naloxone in the Delaware community to prevent death from the overdose of opioids. 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.

Nationally, the AMA has endorsed state legislation to increase availability of naloxone in many states,¹ 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.² The AMA also has expressed its support to the FDA, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

¹ See, for example, new laws in Colorado; New Jersey; Oklahoma; Wisconsin; and Tennessee.

² A comprehensive discussion of AMA policies, including letters to legislators and national organizations, can be found at www.ama-assn.org/go/stopdrugabuse

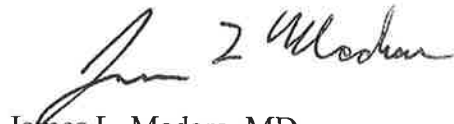
The Honorable Michael A. Barbieri
The Honorable Bethany A. Hall-Long
June 10, 2014
Page 2

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

The bottom line is that the AMA supports S.B. 219 because it will play an important role in helping save the lives of Delaware citizens and as such, we urge your support. 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 efforts on this important public health issue.

Sincerely,



James L. Madara, MD

cc: Medical Society of Delaware
Stephen R. Permut, MD, JD

³ 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. Last accessed May 16, 2013.

⁴ 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/>

⁵ 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