

January 14, 2015

The Honorable Rick C. Becker, MD  
State Representative  
6140 Ponderosa Avenue  
Bismarck, ND 58503-9156

Re: American Medical Association **support for Senate Bill No. 2104** to help reduce death from overdose

Dear Dr. Becker:

On behalf of the American Medical Association (AMA) and our physician and student members, I am writing in support of North Dakota Senate Bill (S.B.) No. 2104 that seeks to increase the availability of naloxone in North Dakota to prevent death from the overdose of opioids. The AMA also supports S.B. 2104 for its common sense liability protections for health care professionals and individuals who seek to help another individual at risk for – or who is experiencing an opioid overdose.

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 and other health professionals, law enforcement and other first responders, who often are the first people on the scene of an overdose. This bill importantly allows 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 has endorsed legislation to increase availability of naloxone in many states<sup>1</sup> and advocated this policy 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 and save lives.<sup>2</sup> Approximately half of the states in the United States now have laws similar to the provisions in S.B. 2104, and we will be advocating that all states have such a law by the end of 2015.

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, new laws in [Colorado](#); [New Jersey](#); [Oklahoma](#); [Wisconsin](#); and [Tennessee](#).

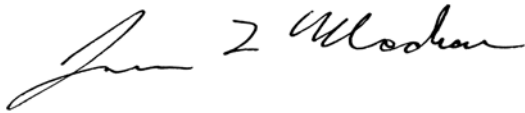
<sup>2</sup> A comprehensive discussion of AMA policies, including letters to legislators and national organizations, can be found at [www.ama-assn.org/go/stopdrugabuse](http://www.ama-assn.org/go/stopdrugabuse)

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For all of the above-stated reasons, we encourage your support of S.B. 2104. 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 leadership on this important public health issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James L. Madara". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and a long horizontal stroke.

James L. Madara, MD

cc: The Honorable Howard C. Anderson, Jr.  
North Dakota Medical Association