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December 11, 2014

The Honorable Raymond J. Lesniak
New Jersey State Senate
985 Stuyvesant Ave.
Union, NJ 07083

The Honorable Joseph F. Vitale
New Jersey State Senate
569 Rahway Ave.
Woodbridge, NJ 07095

Re: American Medical Association support for Assembly Bill 3723, increasing access to medication-assisted treatment

Dear Senators Lesniak and Vitale:

On behalf of the physician and medical student members of the American Medical Association (AMA), I write in **support** of Assembly Bill (A.B.) 3723, which seeks, among other things, to increase access to medication-assisted treatment (MAT) for patients with substance use disorders. More than two million people in the United States suffer from substance use disorders related to prescription opioid pain relievers, and an estimated 467,000 people are addicted to heroin, according to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, *Results from the 2012 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Summary of National Findings*. New Jersey can directly help address this epidemic through enhanced efforts to increase treatment and prevention, including increased access to MAT services in the community, via drug courts and other appropriate settings and programs.

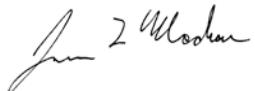
The AMA further supports A.B. 3723 for its emphasis on using MAT services in combination with counseling and behavioral therapies, to provide a comprehensive approach to the treatment of substance use disorders. Research shows that when treating substance use disorders, a combination of medication and behavioral therapies is most successful. According to the Center for Medicaid and CHIP Services, “there is strong evidence that use of MAT in managing substance use disorders provides substantial cost savings” to states. MAT services also have been shown to help reduce recidivism for those drug courts that offer MAT services.

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Based on all of the above, we thank you for your leadership on this issue and urge the full New Jersey Senate's support for A.B. 3723. 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: Mishael Azam
Representative Herb Conaway, Jr.
Representative Raj Mukerji
Representative Shavonda E. Sumber
Representative Angelica M. Jimenez