



Michael D. Maves, MD, MBA, Executive Vice President, CEO

July 27, 2005

The Honorable Edward Whitfield
United States House of Representatives
301 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Whitfield:

On behalf of the American Medical Association (AMA) and its physician and medical student members, I offer our strong support for H.R. 1132, the "National All Schedules Prescription Electronic Reporting Act of 2005." We are pleased that this legislation recognizes both the vital role physicians play in preventing prescription drug abuse, as well as the importance of limiting access to confidential patient information.

Prescription drug abuse is one of the fastest growing public health problems facing our country. The nonmedical use of prescription drugs now ranks second behind marijuana as a category of illicit drug abuse among adults and youth. In 2002, the National Survey on Drug Use and Health conducted by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) found that an estimated 6.2 million persons in the U.S. over the age of 12 reported "past month" use of prescription stimulants, sedatives, tranquilizers, and analgesics for non-medical purposes. This compares to roughly 3.5 million and 1.6 million, respectively, in 2001 and 2000.

By providing physicians with access to important patient information, they can effectively treat their patients' pain or illness while helping to prevent the abuse and diversion of controlled substances. This principle of "balance" between access to necessary pain medication and the prevention of abuse has long been supported by the AMA. We are confident that H.R. 1132, through the provision of grants to states for the creation or expansion of voluntary, state-based controlled substance monitoring programs, will serve as a critical tool to preserve this balance.

We thank you for your strong leadership on this valuable legislation, and we look forward to working with you to ensure its enactment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Maves". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Michael D. Maves, MD, MBA

cc: U.S. House of Representatives