

American Medical Association

Physicians dedicated to the health of America



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May 3, 2005

The Honorable Mark E. Souder
U.S. House of Representatives
2231 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Souder:

On behalf of the American Medical Association (AMA) and its physician and medical student members, I am writing to express our support for H.R. 869, the "Drug Addiction Treatment Expansion Act." This legislation, which will be marked up soon by the full Energy and Commerce Committee, would lift the cap on the number of patients for which physicians in group practices can prescribe drug addiction treatments.

The current 30-patient cap, which applies not only to individual physicians but also to group practices, has limited access to effective substance abuse treatment services. For example, buprenorphine was approved in 2002 by the FDA for treating opioid dependence. There is broad consensus in the medical community that buprenorphine is a major new tool to fight addiction, and does not have a high potential for misuse or fatal overdose. Lifting the cap would enable group practices to treat more patients with this highly effective drug.

The AMA strongly supports increased access to treatment for drug addiction and physician office-based treatment of opioid addiction. We believe that H.R. 869 will improve access to addiction treatment, expand options for patients, and remove disincentives to the development of new treatment medications for addiction. We are pleased to support this bill and applaud you for your leadership on this critical public health issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M D Maves".

Michael D. Maves, MD, MBA

cc: Chairman Joe Barton
Chairman Nathan Deal