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July 22, 2015

The Honorable Joseph Pitts
Chairman
Subcommittee on Health
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
420 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Frank Pallone, Jr.
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Health
Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
237 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Pitts and Ranking Member Pallone:

On behalf of the physician and medical student members of the American Medical Association (AMA), I am writing in support of H.R. 1725, the “National All Schedules Prescription Electronic Reporting Reauthorization Act (NASPER),” introduced by Representative Ed Whitfield, Ranking Member Frank Pallone, and Representatives Larry Bucshon and Joseph Kennedy. The AMA applauds the committee for taking up this important legislation. In short, the reauthorization of NASPER and full appropriations are urgently needed to ensure that physicians across the country have patient-specific information through prescription drug monitoring programs (PDMPs) at the point-of-care.

PDMPs help physicians and other providers to make appropriate prescribing decisions and ensure that patients with legitimate pain management needs continue to have access to medically necessary care. PDMPs are also an important tool in the fight against prescription drug misuse, by providing reliable and actionable information. We are in the midst of an epidemic of prescription drug opioid misuse, abuse, overdose, and deaths from such drugs. At the same time, we are seeing an alarming related trend with patients turning to illicit drugs such as heroin as the supply of prescription drugs decreases. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than 16,000 Americans died in 2013 from an opioid-related overdose, while more than 8,000 died from a heroin-related overdose. Physicians need to be sure that they are prescribing appropriately and taking necessary precautions, including consulting PDMPs when clinically indicated.

States also recognize that PDMPs are a helpful public health tool to address this public health crisis as evidenced by their near universal adoption. However, funding support for PDMPs is needed to ensure that physicians across the country have access to this effective tool to combat prescription drug abuse and to incentivize further implementation of best practices and information sharing between states.

The AMA is strongly committed to addressing the nation’s opioid epidemic, and looks forward to working with you to reauthorize and fully fund NASPER.

Sincerely,

James L. Madara, MD

cc: The Honorable Ed Whitfield
The Honorable Larry Buchson
The Honorable Joseph Kennedy