



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

July 27, 2005

The Honorable J. Dennis Hastert
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232 Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Hastert:

On behalf of the American Medical Association (AMA) and its physician and medical student members, I am writing to express our support for S. 45, the "Drug Addiction Treatment Expansion Act." This legislation, which is identical to the AMA-supported H.R. 869, was passed by the Senate last week and is scheduled to be considered on the House suspension calendar this week.

S. 45 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 S. 45 will improve access to addiction treatment, expand options for patients, and remove disincentives to the development of new treatment medications for addiction. We urge the House to pass this important public health legislation.

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: Members U.S. House of Representatives