



**Association of
American Medical Colleges**

655 K Street, N.W., Suite 100, Washington, D.C. 20001-2399
T 202 828 0460 F 202 862 6161
www.aamc.org

Darrell G. Kirch, M.D.
President and Chief Executive Officer

April 27, 2016

The Honorable Alexander Mooney
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Ann Kuster
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Representatives Mooney and Kuster:

On behalf of the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC), I write to thank you for introducing the “Promoting Responsible Opioid Prescribing (PROP) Act” (H.R. 4499). The Association of American Medical Colleges is a not-for-profit association dedicated to transforming health care through innovative medical education, cutting-edge patient care, and groundbreaking medical research. Its members comprise all 145 accredited U.S. and 17 accredited Canadian medical schools; nearly 400 major teaching hospitals and health systems, including 51 Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers; and more than 80 academic societies. Through these institutions and organizations, the AAMC serves the leaders of America’s medical schools and teaching hospitals and their 148,000 faculty members, 83,000 medical students, and 115,000 resident physicians.

Opioid dependence has devastated communities across the country, and it will take a collective effort across multiple sectors to stem the tide of opioid misuse and substance abuse. Not only must physicians ensure that a patient’s chronic or acute pain is treated appropriately, but they must also assess the risk of opioid misuse. Unfortunately, questions related to pain on the Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (HCAHPS) survey may inadvertently be contributing to the epidemic by penalizing providers based on the survey responses.

This legislation directly addresses this issue by delinking the HCAHPS survey’s pain management questions from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS)’s calculations of hospital incentive payments under the Value-Based Purchasing (VBP) Program. While we understand the importance of this survey to inform hospitals of patients’ perspectives, directly linking a patient’s opinion about how his or her pain was treated with how a hospital and physician are paid is counterintuitive, given the severity of the nation’s prescription drug epidemic.

Again, thank you for your efforts to address the unintended consequences of this survey. The AAMC looks forward to continued collaboration with your offices as this legislation moves forward in Congress.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Darrell G. Kirch".

Darrel G. Kirch, M.D.