



April 21, 2021

**Association of
American Medical Colleges**
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aamc.org

The Honorable Paul Tonko
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Michael Turner
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Maggie Hassan
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Representatives Tonko and Turner and Senators Hassan and Murkowski:

On behalf of the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC), I write to thank you for reintroducing the Mainstreaming Addiction Treatment (MAT) Act of 2021. The AAMC is pleased to support this important legislation.

The AAMC is a not-for-profit association dedicated to transforming health through medical education, health care, medical research, and community collaborations. Its members are all 155 accredited U.S. and 17 accredited Canadian medical schools; more than 400 teaching hospitals and health systems, including Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers; and more than 70 academic societies. Through these institutions and organizations, the AAMC leads and serves America's medical schools and teaching hospitals and their more than 179,000 full-time faculty members, 92,000 medical students, 140,000 resident physicians, and 60,000 graduate students and postdoctoral researchers in the biomedical sciences.

As you know, patients who seek care for treatment of opioid use disorder continue to have significant difficulty in accessing treatment options that reflect the most current science. Studies have shown the effectiveness of buprenorphine in safely treating opioid use disorder, but a federal waiver is required to prescribe the medication. While the number of waived clinicians has increased in recent years, still only a small fraction of physicians has completed the waiver process, leaving a limited number of clinicians able to prescribe buprenorphine, despite the overwhelming demand for this evidence-based treatment.

To help eliminate a hurdle to making buprenorphine more accessible, the AAMC strongly supports your legislation to suspend the waiver requirement under the Drug Addiction Treatment Act of 2000. This outdated waiver requirement disincentivizes clinicians from providing evidenced-based treatment and by extension limits patients' access to such treatment. Removing the waiver requirement would not harm quality or patient safety, and instead would help make it easier for patients to receive needed care for opioid use disorder.

Medical schools and teaching hospitals continue their work to improve the education of health care professionals in treating and managing chronic pain, addiction, and opioid use disorder, and our members are making great strides in these areas with an evidence-based approach to medical education. Similarly, academic medical centers are advancing research and clinical innovations to better prevent, identify, and treat opioid misuse. Your legislation to eliminate the “x-waiver” would greatly facilitate this work. While no single intervention on its own will fully resolve the challenges that individuals with substance use disorders face in accessing the treatment that they need, the MAT Act would take an important step forward in addressing one of the many barriers to expanding care.

Thank you again for your efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karen D. Fisher". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Karen Fisher, J.D.
AAMC Chief Public Policy Officer