



James L. Madara, MD
Executive Vice President, CEO

American Medical Association
515 N. State Street
Chicago, Illinois 60654

ama-assn.org

(p) 312.464.5000
(f) 312.464.4184

January 23, 2012

The Honorable Louise Slaughter
U.S. House of Representatives
2469 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Re: H.R. 2939, Pharmaceutical Stewardship Act of 2011

Dear Representative Slaughter:

On behalf of the physician and medical student members of the American Medical Association (AMA), I want to thank you for introducing H.R. 2939, the "Pharmaceutical Stewardship Act of 2011," which would help combat diversion of prescription drugs as well as to safeguard drinking water from pharmaceutical contaminants. H.R. 2939 would establish an infrastructure and resources to ensure that patients and physicians have a safe means of disposing of unused prescription drugs on a regular basis and at a time and place convenient to them.

Currently, the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) hosts regional unused prescription drug take-back events. Unfortunately, neither the resources nor the capacity exist to establish convenient local sites where unused drugs may be safely and legally returned all year round. We have seen the consequences when individuals do not know where or how to dispose of their unused prescription drugs. The environmental impact grows annually. It has been estimated that at least 46 million Americans have been exposed to prescription drugs through their drinking water. Equally troubling, unused prescription drugs left in homes are highly susceptible to diversion, misuse, and abuse and contribute to the public health scourge of prescription drug abuse.

H.R. 2939 would establish a mandatory, industry-financed national take-back program for the return of unused prescription drugs. A nonprofit corporation financed by the pharmaceutical industry would be responsible for establishing a comprehensive drug take-back programs in every state. H.R. 2939 would also set up a commission to develop a strategy to prevent pharmaceutical contaminants from polluting waterways and the environment from production to disposal. Under the bill, manufacturers would be required to either become part of an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) approved national

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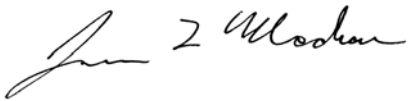
Page 2

program or other EPA-approved programs comprising one or more drug makers or sellers. Collected pharmaceuticals would be incinerated.

H.R. 2939 represents an important and proven strategy in addressing a significant contributor to the epidemic of prescription drug abuse in this country while also ensuring that our environment and drinking water do not become another casualty.

We appreciate your leadership on this important matter and welcome the opportunity to work with you to advance H.R. 2939.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jim L Madara".

James L. Madara, MD