

Nov. 19, 2021: State Advocacy Update

Updated model state legislation would expand access to harm reduction services

The AMA Board of Trustees has approved updates to AMA model state legislation to support patient health and increase access to harm reduction services. Two areas of the updated model bills would allow for “distribution” of naloxone and another provision would decriminalize fentanyl test strips and other drug-checking supplies.

While most states have laws that provide for access to naloxone and support standing orders for naloxone, this updated model bill would allow, for example, emergency departments to directly distribute naloxone to patients who have survived an overdose event. Decriminalizing fentanyl test strips is necessary at the state level to take advantage of the ability to use federal funds to purchase the strips. The AMA encourages all states to consider introducing the provisions in the updated model bill during their 2022 state legislative sessions.

Additional updates to the model state bill included provisions to:

- Provide greater support of sterile needle and syringe exchange services.
- Prohibit insurers from taking adverse actions against those who obtain naloxone.
- Protect patients from being tracked and monitored as a result of obtaining a naloxone prescription.

If you have questions about the model bill or wish to obtain a copy, please email Daniel Blaney-Koen, JD, Senior Legislative Attorney, AMA Advocacy Resource Center.

Updated AMA resources detail research, reports of nation’s overdose epidemic

Three updates to AMA resources detail the increasing scope of the worsening drug overdose epidemic, research that has been released and state-level efforts to help patients.

“America’s drug overdose epidemic: Select 2020-2021 research” (PDF) provides resources, data and research showing, among other things—model legislation focused on ensuring public health uses for opioid-related litigation, increasing mortality from methamphetamine and illicit stimulants, myths and stigma associated with reports of buprenorphine diversion, benefits of Opioid Treatment Programs and the dangers of rapid tapering for patients who benefit from opioid therapy.

“Issue brief: Nation’s drug-related overdose and death epidemic continues to worsen” (PDF) provides the most recent news and other reports from every state in the nation detailing how the nation’s drug-related overdose and death epidemic is becoming worse. Illicit fentanyl, methamphetamine and a fentanyl-contaminated drug supply along with polysubstance use are driving the epidemic closer and closer to more than 100,000 deaths in the previous 12 months.

“Issue brief: Reports of efforts to help the nation’s overdose epidemic” (PDF) highlights media and other reports from more than 40 states about efforts to increase access to medications to treat opioid use disorder, help patients with pain, expand access to naloxone, fentanyl test strips and other harm reduction measures and reduce inequities in care.

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