WHEREAS, the opioid epidemic has become a critical threat to public health in the U.S.¹; and
WHEREAS, only 10 percent of individuals in the U.S. with an opioid use disorder obtain treatment¹; and
WHEREAS, less than half of facilities that provide inpatient treatment for opioid use disorder offer an FDA-approved medication for opioid use disorder²³; and
WHEREAS, the risk of a fatal overdose increases 25-fold in the month immediately after inpatient treatment of opioid use disorder without medication⁴, in part due to loss of opioid tolerance⁵; and
WHEREAS, opioid overdose death is reduced by 50% by treatment with opioid replacement therapy (buprenorphine or methadone)⁶, which prevents loss of opioid tolerance; and
WHEREAS, the FDA is pursuing strategies to eliminate barriers and promote access to all effective medications known to address opioid use disorder at state-certified opioid treatment programs; and
WHEREAS, the President’s Commission on Combating Drug Addiction and the Opioid Crisis recommended a requirement that all three FDA-approved medications (buprenorphine, methadone and naltrexone) be available at every facility licensed to treat opioid use disorder⁷, and clinical guidelines indicate that the choice of treatment options should be a shared decision between the clinician and the patient⁸; therefore be it

References:
RESOLVED, That our American Medical Association adopt a policy that recognizes the use of buprenorphine or methadone as effective treatment for opioid use disorder, and encourages the appropriate use of medication and non-medication-based treatment (New HOD Policy); and be it further

RESOLVED, That our AMA advocate for legislation to eliminate barriers and require access to all three FDA-approved medications (buprenorphine, methadone and naltrexone) at all legally certified drug treatment facilities, and advocate for standards, policies and funding to support access to these medications at treatment facilities (New HOD Policy); and be it further

RESOLVED, That our AMA conduct a campaign to increase awareness on the part of providers, treatment programs, and the public that AMA recognizes the use of buprenorphine or methadone as effective treatment for opioid use disorder. (Directive to Take Action)

Fiscal Note: Not yet determined

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