



**American Hospital
Association**

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March 1, 2016

The Honorable Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senate
530 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rob Portman
United States Senate
448 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Amy Klobuchar
United States Senate
302 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kelly Ayotte
United States Senate
144 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Whitehouse, Portman, Klobuchar, and Ayotte:

On behalf of our nearly 5,000 member hospitals, health systems, and other health care organizations, and our 43,000 individual members, the American Hospital Association (AHA) thanks you for your leadership in crafting legislation to help stem the epidemic of opioid abuse. We are pleased to support S. 524, the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act, as an important first step toward addressing this burgeoning crisis.

Hospitals see firsthand the effects of opioid abuse, addiction and overdoses in the communities we serve across the nation. Our members' experiences in treating those affected by opioid use disorders have demonstrated that only a multifaceted approach that invests in education, prevention, treatment and rehabilitation can end the public health crisis that threatens the health and lives of millions of Americans. While numerous state legislatures have enacted legislation to address the misuse of opioids, we believe that a coordinated nationwide strategy, including grant programs to support the efforts of state and local governments and community-based organizations, and expanded use of prescription drug monitoring programs (PDMPs), is required. The AHA also supports the provisions of your bill that would increase training for first responders to administer life-saving medications such as Naloxone to those experiencing opioid overdoses. Additionally, we support increased access to medication assisted treatment (MAT), which has been proven effective in treatment and recovery.

Finally, we note that hospitals and health systems play a distinct role in helping to end the opioid epidemic -- a role that others cannot fulfill.



Senators Whitehouse, Portman, Klobuchar, and Ayotte
March 1, 2016
Page 2 of 2

Hospitals treat patients for pain; physicians and other practitioners employed and affiliated with hospitals prescribe opioids; and individuals present at emergency departments every day seeking opioids. While other stakeholders in the community have a role to play in stopping the epidemic, they do not treat patients on an ongoing basis, prescribe opioids or have emergency departments. The AHA applauds your efforts in moving this important legislation and we look forward to working with you to ensure its passage.

Sincerely,

/s/