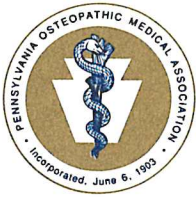


POMA



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September 17, 2019

Hon. Gene DiGirolamo
49 East Wing
PO Box 202018
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2018

RE: Senate Bill 675, Limiting Patient Access to Buprenorphine

Dear Representative DiGirolamo,

On behalf of the over 8,400 Osteopathic physicians, residents and students in the Commonwealth, the Pennsylvania Osteopathic Medical Association (POMA) respectfully requests that you oppose Senate Bill 675 as currently drafted at the House Human Services Committee (Committee) meeting on Wednesday, September 18, 2019

POMA understands the policy intent of SB 675 is to address unscrupulous cash-based clinics that are apparently not doing what is best for patients. However, there are many more office-based physicians who are providing the highest level of care for their patients trying to help them with their disease of addiction, and buprenorphine is an important part of this care. The requirement for patient participation in an addiction treatment program licensed by the Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs (DDAP) as legislated in SB 675, is problematic because there are not enough programs in Pennsylvania to accommodate all the patients that are prescribed buprenorphine and suffer from the disease of addiction.

DDAP is currently hosting eight regional Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) Summits this fall. The purpose of these summits is to promote awareness of MAT options for opioid use disorder and to increase the number of practitioners using the waiver to prescribe buprenorphine in an office-based setting. SB 675 is counter to this DDAP undertaking with the likely consequence of minimizing access, as more physicians will likely stop prescribing buprenorphine because of higher costs and increased regulatory burden SB 675 imposes.

POMA understands that many physicians are certified to prescribe buprenorphine with the DEA which includes an 8-hour course on addiction. This certification is already required in Pennsylvania and has been since 2002 when office-based prescribing was launched. Therefore, additional certification by the state is recognized as an increased regulatory burden and cost to physician medical practices.

POMA is committed to working with the Committee and staff in crafting solutions for the issues SB 675 seeks to address. However, as it is currently drafted, POMA cannot support SB 675 and requests you to oppose it in Committee. If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to Andy Sandusky, POMA EVP of Public Policy and Association Affairs at 717.727.3668 or asandusky@poma.org

Sincerely,

Pamela S.N. Goldman, DO
President