



PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

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PAEAonline.org • 703-548-5538

January 26, 2018

The Honorable Edward Markey
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rand Paul
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Margaret Hassan
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Susan Collins
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Markey, Paul, Hassan, and Collins:

On behalf of the Physician Assistant Education Association (PAEA), we are writing to express appreciation for your leadership in addressing the opioid epidemic through the recent introduction of the Addiction Treatment Access Improvement Act in the Senate. PAEA represents the 229 accredited PA education programs in the United States, which collectively graduate more than 8,000 PAs each year. As the opioid epidemic continues to ravage communities across our country, we and our member programs are acutely aware of the pivotal role that PAs in training will ultimately play in stemming the tide of this national crisis.

As you are undoubtedly aware, the CDC estimates that more than 64,000 people died in 2016 due to drug overdoses, with 42,249 succumbing to opioids. The depth of this epidemic clearly illustrates the need for rapidly expanded treatment capacity within a comprehensive public health strategy. The Addiction Treatment Access Improvement Act would build upon the improved capacity of PAs to provide medication-assisted treatment (MAT) as provided for by the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act of 2016 (CARA).

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As PAEA works in close collaboration with the addiction treatment community to expand waiver training for PAs to prescribe MAT under the Drug Addiction Treatment Act, we wholeheartedly endorse the provision of the Addiction Treatment Access and Improvement Act that would make permanent the temporary status of waiver training for PAs. The elimination of the time restriction under current law would be a valuable step forward in ensuring the continuity of a sustained response to the opioid epidemic that will be required of PAs, among other providers.

We look forward to opportunities to work collaboratively with your offices to ensure the advancement of this legislation and would be happy to serve as a resource as Congress continues to respond to the opioid crisis. For any questions or additional information, please contact Director of Government Relations Athena Abdullah at aabdullah@PAEAonline.org or (703) 667-4322.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lisa Mustone Alexander".

Lisa Mustone Alexander, EdD, MPH, PA-C
President

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Timi Agar Barwick".

Timi Agar Barwick, MPM
Chief Executive Officer