

February 19, 2021

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The Honorable Paul Tonko  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2369 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Tonko,

The Society of Hospital Medicine is pleased to offer our support for the Mainstreaming Addiction Treatment Act. This legislation will eliminate the X-Waiver prescribing requirement for buprenorphine, a lifesaving medication for opioid use disorder (OUD).

SHM represents the nation's hospitalists, who are front-line clinicians in America's acute care hospitals. Hospitalists focus on the general medical care of hospitalized patients and manage the inpatient clinical care of their patients. As a result, hospitalists have found themselves on the frontlines of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, hospitalists have also found themselves on the frontlines of an additional crisis—the opioid epidemic.

Opioid overdose deaths have increased throughout the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic and we must expand access to buprenorphine, an opioid medication used to treat OUD. Since buprenorphine is classified as a Schedule III controlled substance, providers are unable to prescribe buprenorphine without applying for a special license, known as the "X-Waiver." The X-waiver prescribing requirement functions as an unnecessary obstacle to treatment and severely limits access to this lifesaving medication.

Despite restrictions, buprenorphine is a beneficial, safe, and life-saving therapy that must be made more widely accessible to combat the opioid epidemic. Removing barriers to the use of buprenorphine will help hospitalists more effectively care for their patients suffering from OUD. SHM strongly supports the Mainstreaming Addiction Treatment Act and stands ready to work alongside you to advocate for its passage.

Sincerely,



Danielle Scheurer, MD, MSRC, SFHM  
President, Society of Hospital Medicine