



August 30, 2023

The Honorable Brittany Pettersen
U.S. House of Representatives
1230 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Pettersen:

On behalf of the American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP) and our nearly 40,000 members, thank you for introducing the “Hospitals as Naloxone Distribution Sites (HANDS) Act.” This legislation is an important step in addressing our nation’s opioid and substance use disorder (OUD/SUD) crisis by providing no-cost coverage under Medicare, Medicaid, and TRICARE for the preventive distribution of opioid overdose reversal agents like naloxone.

As you well know, emergency physicians are on the front lines of our nation’s opioid and substance use disorder (OUD/SUD) epidemic. We have witnessed first-hand the alarming increases in rates of drug overdoses and overdose deaths over the last several years, and every day we see the toll it takes on our patients, their families, and our communities.

There is no one-size-fits-all solution that will solve the OUD/SUD and overdose crisis, but fortunately, we have a growing array of tools that we can use in our efforts to address this public health challenge. This includes opioid overdose reversal agents, such as naloxone, that when used properly can rapidly reverse an overdose and can be easily administered by family members, bystanders, or other laypeople without any training required. Preemptively providing naloxone to patients at risk of opioid overdose, along with greater education and awareness about overdose treatment, helps reduce overdose deaths in our communities.

Naloxone is only one piece of the puzzle, but a critical one in our comprehensive efforts to reduce overdose deaths. Your legislation will ensure that naloxone or other overdose reversal agents are covered under Medicare, Medicaid, or TRICARE at no cost to patients at risk of overdose. By eliminating financial barriers to this lifesaving drug, we can provide our patients who have overdosed or who are at risk of overdose with the opportunity to continue on their path to recovery – an opportunity they may not otherwise have had.

Thank you once again for introducing this important legislation and for your continued leadership on this issue. ACEP is grateful for the opportunity to partner with you in this effort, and our members stand ready to help secure enactment of the HANDS Act into law.

Sincerely,

Christopher S. Kang, MD, FACEP
ACEP President

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