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AMA Outlines Steps to Eliminate Barriers to Treatment of Opioid Addiction at AHIMA19

AMA president and former president share Opioid Task Force recommendations at AHIMA's annual conference

CHICAGO – September 17, 2019 – Opioid addiction has been declared a public health emergency in the United States. The American Medical Association's (AMA) President and former president shared the AMA Opioid Task Force's recommendations calling on policy makers to eliminate barriers to the treatment of opioid addiction today at the AHIMA19: Health Data and Information Conference, the annual meeting of the [American Health Information Management Association](http://www.ahima.org) (AHIMA).

Patrice A. Harris, M.D., M.A., AMA president, and David O. Barbe, M.D., M.H.A., vice-president of regional operations at Mercy Hospital Springfield and former AMA president, urged policy makers to eliminate barriers to opioid addiction treatment by:

- Removing prior authorization, step therapy and other inappropriate administrative burdens or barriers that delay or deny care for FDA-approved medications used in medication-assisted treatment
- Supporting assessment, referral and treatment for co-occurring mental disorders, as well as enforce state and federal laws that require insurance parity for mental health and substance use disorders
- Removing administrative and other barriers to comprehensive, multimodal, multidisciplinary pain care and rehabilitation programs
- Supporting maternal and child health by increasing access to evidence-based treatment, preserving families and ensuring policies are nonpunitive

- Supporting reforms in the civil and criminal justice system that help ensure access to high quality, evidence-based care for opioid use disorder including medication-assisted treatment (MAT)

Fifteen states have introduced legislation or taken action based on AMA model legislation regarding the opioid crisis. The AMA is calling on remaining states to follow.

“We are working to better integrate prescription drug monitoring programs into our practices, increasing patient access to life-saving naloxone, becoming trained to provide buprenorphine in-office for the treatment of opioid use disorder and advocating for evidence-based treatments in Congress and state legislatures across the nation,” said Harris. “We must continue to be strategic in our thinking and evidence-based in our approach.”

In November 2017, AHIMA developed an [opioid addiction tip sheet](#) to guide providers in identifying the documentation elements necessary for recording opioid use, abuse or dependency.

“It is imperative that organizations and providers maintain high quality clinical documentation to guarantee the data on this topic is accurate to continue to properly guide research and education regarding opioid addiction,” said AHIMA CEO Wylecia Wiggs Harris, Ph.D., C.A.E. “Healthcare professionals must continue to work together to put an end to this public health emergency.”

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About AHIMA

The American Health Information Management Association (AHIMA) represents more than 103,000 health information professionals in the United States and around the world. AHIMA is committed to promoting and advocating for best practices in health information and to actively contributing to the development and advancement of health information professionals worldwide. AHIMA’s mission is to empower people to impact health. www.ahima.org