



August 18, 2016

The Honorable Patrick Morrissey
Attorney General of West Virginia
State Capitol Complex
Charleston, WV 25305

Dear Mr. Attorney General:

The American Osteopathic Association (AOA), the West Virginia Osteopathic Medical Association (WVOMA) and the American College of Osteopathic Neurologists and Psychiatrists (ACONP) are writing in support of the proposed Best Practices for Prescribing Opioids in West Virginia (Best Practices). Prescription opioid misuse, abuse and diversion has become an epidemic in this country, with more than 20,000 related deaths last year. We share the concerns of the state, and continue to work with stakeholders nationally to address this epidemic. This requires a comprehensive approach that takes into account the need to ensure appropriate access for patients with a legitimate medical need.

The AOA represents more than 123,000 osteopathic physicians (DOs) and osteopathic medical students, promotes public health, encourages scientific research, serves as the primary certifying body for DOs, is the accrediting agency for osteopathic medical schools, and has federal authority to accredit hospitals and other health care facilities. More information on DOs/osteopathic medicine can be found at www.osteopathic.org. WVOMA is a professional organization that serves as the collective voice for the over 1,100 DOs providing patient care in West Virginia. The ACONP represents 890 osteopathic neurologists and psychiatrists from across the United States.

The AOA, WVOMA and ACONP appreciate that the Best Practices can offer recommendations that help guide decision-making, but also recognize the need for latitude to address the unique needs of individual patients and evolution in evidence-based best practices. We agree that physicians should be encouraged to use the state prescription drug monitoring program. When used regularly, this tool can help identify potential misuse and diversion. We also support the need to educate patients on the potential risks of opioid-based treatment. Providing this awareness can assist patients in recognizing potential opioid abuse disorder.

Finally, we strongly support the inclusion and recognition of non-pharmacological modalities in treating pain, including osteopathic manipulative treatment or OMT. Studies have shown that OMT can improve pain symptoms and significantly reduce the need for pain medications.

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We appreciate your work to address this issue and would like to act as a resource as you work with your counterparts nationally to develop similar resources. Should you need any additional information, please feel free to contact Nicholas A. Schilligo, MS, AOA Associate Vice President of State Government Affairs, at nschilligo@osteopathic.org or (800) 621-1773, ext. 8185.

Sincerely,



Boyd R. Buser, DO
President, AOA



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