



March 17, 2023

The Honorable Donald Norcross
2427 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Donald Bacon
2104 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Norcross and Bacon,

On behalf of the American Association of Psychiatric Pharmacists ([AAPP](https://www.aapp.org)), we write in support of the reintroduction of the *Modernizing Opioid Treatment Access Act* (H.R. 1359). This legislation would greatly expand access to methadone for patients with Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) at a time when overdose due to polysubstance use is at an all-time high. AAPP stands ready to work with both your offices and Congress to ensure patients with OUD receive the treatment they need.

AAPP is a professional association of nearly 3,000 members who envision a world where all individuals living with mental illness, including those with substance use, receive safe, appropriate, and effective treatment. Members are specialty pharmacists, and most are Board Certified Psychiatric Pharmacists (BCPPs) who specialize in psychiatry, substance use disorders (SUDs), and psychopharmacology. With a significant shortage of mental health care professionals, psychiatric pharmacists offer another resource to improve outcomes for patients through the provision of evidence-based Comprehensive Medication Management (CMM) services.


Psychiatric pharmacists have a deep understanding of Medications for Opioid Use Disorder (MOUD) that extends beyond that of most other health care providers. When included in the provision of MOUD services through a collaborative practice arrangement, psychiatric pharmacists' involvement has been demonstrated to improve patient adherence and success with buprenorphine treatment for opioid use disorders; reduce per patient dosage of buprenorphine through improved medication management, monitoring and titration; and reduce overall costs for treating patients with SUDs by relieving providers from delivering services including medication management, counseling, monitoring and follow-up visits.

Psychiatric pharmacists support expanding access to methadone outside of the Opioid Treatment Program (OTP) setting and therefore lauds the *Modernizing Opioid Treatment Access Act* for doing so. We join you in seeking to address the antiquated, forty-year-old methadone regulations to save lives. Research on the COVID flexibilities for methadone access showed no evidence of increased methadone [overdose](#) or [diversion](#). Additionally, there are fewer than [1,700 OTPs](#) severely limiting access in both rural and urban areas to this lifesaving treatment. The bill would also fix the contradictory policy that pharmacies can dispense methadone for pain but not to treat OUD. The bill also allows for the use of telehealth support for counseling and other ancillary services. Furthermore, expanding access to methadone outside of OTPs will help decrease stigma people experience in seeking treatment by integrating it into the health care system.

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The *Modernizing Opioid Treatment Access Act* is a key component in addressing the polysubstance overdose crisis. We stand ready to work with you to ensure patients with OUD across the country have access to the treatments they need, and we thank you for your leadership on this pressing matter. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or our Health Policy Consultant, Laura Hanen at lahanen@venable.com.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brenda Schimenti". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Brenda" and last name "Schimenti" clearly distinguishable.

Brenda K. Schimenti
Executive Director

cc: The Honorable Ann Kuster
 The Honorable David Trone
 The Honorable Brian Fitzpatrick
 The Honorable Paul Tonko
 The Honorable Brittany Pettersen
 The Honorable Andy Kim