



March 13, 2017

The Honorable Jonathan Dismang
President Pro Tempore
Arkansas State Senate
P.O. Box 475
Beebe, AR 72912

Dear President Dismang:

The American Osteopathic Association (AOA) and the Arkansas Osteopathic Medical Association (AOMA) are writing to urge you to amend SB 339. This bill increases the frequency with which health care providers must query the Arkansas Prescription Monitoring System when prescribing opioids to their patients. While the AOA and AOMA support the intent of the prescription drug monitoring program, we would like to request an amendment to facilitate physicians' ability to provide high-quality, timely care to their patients.

The AOA represents nearly 130,000 osteopathic physicians (DOs) and osteopathic medical students, promotes public health, encourages scientific research, serves as the primary certifying body for DOs and is the accrediting agency for osteopathic medical schools. More information on DOs/osteopathic medicine can be found at www.osteopathic.org. AOMA is a professional medical organization that represents over 300 DOs providing patient care in Arkansas.

Misuse and diversion of controlled substances is a significant and growing public health problem that must be addressed through a multi-pronged public health approach. The AOA and AOMA support initiatives to address our nation's prescription drug abuse epidemic, but physicians have an equally compelling ethical obligation to preserve access to effective pain medicine options for patients.

The PDMP query requirements in the current version of the bill are inappropriate because:

- They may create **unnecessary burdens on physicians treating patients with legitimate pain care needs and limit timely access to care for patients.**
- Physicians have both **extensive medical education and comprehensive training that prepares them to understand medical treatment of disease**, complex case management and safe prescribing practices.
- Many physicians have **undergone advanced training and certification in pain practice** and see complex pain patients, and adding additional PDMP query requirements may unnecessarily disrupt their ability to deliver appropriate patient care.

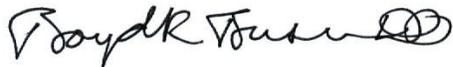
The AOA and AOMA respectfully request the following amendment:

Page 2. Delete line 22 and substitute the following:

"failure. (D) The State Board of Health may, by regulation, amend the exemptions listed in subdivision (d)(2)(C) of this section upon a recommendation from the Director of the Department of Health and a showing that the exemption or lack of exemption is unnecessarily burdensome or has created a hardship."

Chronic pain is a devastating affliction that impacts millions of American lives. The AOA and AOMS support a variety of approaches to limit prescription drug misuse while ensuring that patients with legitimate need maintain access to timely pain care. **The AOA and AOMA thank you for your consideration of our proposed amendment to SB 339.** Should you or your staff have any questions, please contact Nick Schilligo, AOA's Associate Vice President for State Government Affairs, at nschilligo@osteopathic.org or (312) 202-8185.

Sincerely,



Boyd R. Buser, DO
President, AOA



Gary S. Edwards, DO, FACOFP
President, AOMA

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