



February 9, 2018

The Honorable Alberta Darling
Senate Chairwoman
Wisconsin State Joint Committee on Finance
Room 317 East
State Capitol
PO Box 7882
Madison, Wisconsin 53707

Dear Chairwoman Darling:

The American Osteopathic Association (AOA) and Wisconsin Association of Osteopathic Physicians and Surgeons (WAOPS) are writing in support of AB 7. This bill increases funding for graduate medical education programs in addiction medicine and addiction psychiatry, and expands addiction medicine fellowship opportunities for physicians practicing in certain specialties, including primary care. The AOA and WAOPS strongly support increased funding for physicians training in these and other mental health specialties as a critical step towards alleviating mental health care shortages and the opioid and addiction crisis in Wisconsin.

The AOA represents 137,000 osteopathic physicians (DOs) and 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. WAOPS is a professional medical organization that represents over 1,200 DOs providing patient care in Wisconsin.

The osteopathic medical profession is committed to serving underserved populations:

- **Fifty-six percent** of active DOs **practice in primary care specialties**, including those eligible for the addiction medicine fellowships under Assembly Bill 7 (family medicine, internal medicine and pediatrics).¹
- **DOs comprise 11% of all US physicians** but are responsible for **16% of patient visits** in communities with **populations of fewer than 2,500**.²
- **DOs represent 40% of all physicians who are located in medically underserved areas** or who treat medically underserved populations.³

¹ Osteopathic Medical Profession Report: 2017. Available at: <https://www.osteopathic.org/inside-aoa/about/aoa-annual-statistics/Documents/2017-omp-report.pdf>.

² Osteopathic Medicine and Medical Education in Brief, American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine. Available at: <http://www.aacom.org/about/osteomed/Pages/default.aspx>.


³ 2013 National Center for the Analysis of Healthcare Data (NCAHD)'s Enhanced State Licensure

The State of Wisconsin:

- Currently has **134 Mental Health Care Health Professional Shortage Areas**.⁴
- **Meets just 20% of all need for mental health care**; nationally, that figure is 50%.⁵
- Has an **opioid overdose death rate of 15.8 people per 100,000**, which represents a **41% increase from the previous year** (as of 2016, the most recent year for which data is available).⁶

The AOA and WAOPS believe that AB 7 would help address the opioid and addiction crisis in Wisconsin, and we thank you for your leadership in introducing this important piece of legislation. Should you need any additional information, please feel free to contact Raine Richards, JD, Director, Public Policy at richards@osteopathic.org or (800) 621-1773, ext. 8199.

Sincerely,



Mark A. Baker, DO
President, AOA



Lenard Markman, DO
Past President & Advocacy Chairman, WAOPS

CC: William S. Mayo, DO, President-elect, AOA
Joseph M. Yasso, Jr., DO, Chair, Department of Governmental Affairs, AOA
Thomas L. Ely, DO, Chair, Bureau of State Government Affairs, AOA
Adrienne White-Faines, MPA, Chief Executive Officer, AOA
David Pugach, JD, Senior Vice President, Public Policy, AOA
Raine Richards, JD, Director, State Government Affairs, AOA
Sumeet Goel, DO, Interim Executive Director & President-elect, WAOPS

⁴ No author. "Mental Health Care Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs)." *Kaiser Family Foundation*, Mar. 1, 2017. Available at: <http://kff.org/other/state-indicator/mental-health-care-health-professional-shortage-areas-hpsas/?activeTab=map¤tTimeframe=0&selectedDistributions=total-mental-health-care-hpsa-designations&selectedRows=%7B%22nested%22:%7B%22iowa%22:%7B%7D%7D%7D&sortModel=%7B%22colId%22:%22Location%22,%22sort%22:%22asc%22%7D> .

⁵ Hauer, Sarah. "Shortage of Psychiatrists Compounds State's Mental Health Care Problems." *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, Aug. 8, 2015. Available at: <http://archive.jsonline.com/watchdog/watchdogreports/shortage-of-psychiatrists-compounds-states-mental-health-care-problems-b99541267z1-321154411.html/>.

⁶ No author. "Opioid Overdose Death Rates and All Drug Overdose Death Rates per 100,000 Population (Age-Adjusted)." *Kaiser Family Foundation*, 2016. Available at: <https://www.kff.org/other/state-indicator/opioid-overdose-death-rates/?currentTimeframe=0&sortModel=%7B%22colId%22:%22Location%22,%22sort%22:%22asc%22%7D>.