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November 19, 2025

Re: MiSAM's Support of Utilizing Opioid Settlement Funds for the implementation of Addiction Medicine Fellowships in the State of Michigan

Dear Dr. Natasha Bagdasarian, Chief Medical Executive (Michigan Department of Health and Human Services),

The Michigan Society of Addiction Medicine (MiSAM) is writing to respectfully urge you to allocate a portion of the FY26 opioid settlement funds to support Addiction Medicine Fellowship training in our state.

In 2023, there was an estimated **2,931 drug overdose deaths** in Michigan. Given this precedent and the ongoing devastation of life to Michiganders resulting from the addiction crisis and opioid epidemic, we urge you to allocate funding to train the future workforce. According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), the best way to address the opioid epidemic is to expand access to FDA-approved medications for opioid use disorder, buprenorphine and methadone for people struggling with opioid use disorder (OUD). This would require that future medical professionals are trained in the safe and effective management of patients with OUD and substance use disorder. It is estimated that the death toll could be reduced by 50% if all individuals who need these medications have access to them. The most effective approach is to expand the addiction specialty physician workforce by funding Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)-accredited addiction medicine fellows. This important request is especially critical since the American Board of Preventive Medicine (ABPM) ended the practice pathway for addiction medicine board certification in 2025 making the workforce shortage more acute and the fellowship funding even more important. The only way now for a physician to become eligible for the initial addiction medicine board certification exam is by completing an ACGME-accredited fellowship in addiction medicine.

At present, Michigan has only two accredited Addiction Medicine Fellowship programs, each training two fellows per year. **Three other institutions**—Western Michigan University (Kalamazoo County), University of Michigan (Washtenaw County), and Henry Ford Genesys (Genesee County) – are actively seeking accreditation, but have encountered substantial

financial obstacles in establishing their programs. Despite a clear institutional commitment, these programs have indicated that they are unable to finance fellows without external financial support.

We propose that the State of Michigan allocate Opioid Settlement funding to support one fellow at each of the five programs (two existing and three emerging), using a portion of the FY26 opioid settlement funds. **Specifically, we request support from the \$5 million year-over-year funding to ensure the sustainability and growth of Michigan's addiction medicine workforce.** Addiction fellows who are trained in Michigan have a greater tendency of entering clinical practice and serving the communities in Michigan. This aligns with other Michigan Department of Health and Human Services allocations, specifically a known allocation to the University of Michigan to fund forensic psychiatry fellows annually.

This investment aligns with national recommendations from the American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM). ASAM emphasizes the urgent need to expand the addiction medicine workforce to meet the growing demand for evidence-based care. Fellowship-trained physicians are uniquely equipped to lead clinical, educational, and policy efforts to address substance use disorders across diverse populations.

This modest investment would yield significant returns by:

- Expanding access to high-quality addiction care across Michigan.
- Strengthening our public health response to the opioid crisis.
- Building a pipeline of physician leaders trained in prevention, treatment, and recovery.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss this proposal further and provide additional data on program readiness, cost estimates, and anticipated impact.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to advancing addiction care in Michigan.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Ismael D. Yanga, MD, FASAM". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a stylized "I" and "Y".

Ismael D. Yanga, MD, FASAM
President, Michigan Society of Addiction Medicine