



Alabama Society of Addiction Medicine

A Chapter of American Society of Addiction Medicine

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May 10, 2023

The Honorable Paul W. Lee
Chair
House Committee on Health
Alabama Legislature
11 South Union Street
Montgomery, AL 36130

Re: ALSAM's Support for HB433/SB239, Medication Assisted Treatment for Opioid Use Act, repealed

Dear Chair Lee,

On behalf of the Alabama Society of Addiction Medicine (ALSAM), the medical specialty society representing physicians and clinicians specializing in the prevention and treatment of addiction, thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important issue. **We write to express our support for HB433/SB239.** This legislation would repeal a previous law passed in 2019 requiring the Alabama Board of Medical Examiners to adopt rules governing the prescribing and use of medications containing buprenorphine to treat opioid use disorder (OUD) in nonresidential settings. Additionally, HB433/SB239 would also remove the cap on the number of prescribers of buprenorphine, bringing the state into compliance with recent changes in federal law.

Buprenorphine is one of three Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved medications to treat OUD. As such, it is an evidence-based treatment for OUD, proven to improve public health outcomes for patients, such as improving patient survival, increasing retention in treatment, reducing criminal activity, and improving patients' ability to gain and maintain employment.ⁱ Last year, the federal government took significant steps to enhance access to evidence-based treatment by removing the federal "X-waiver" to prescribe buprenorphine for OUD (and associated patient limits), as part of Section 1262 of the [Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023](#).ⁱⁱ As such, prescribers no longer need to acquire a special waiver from the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) to prescribe buprenorphine.

In accordance with recent changes in the federal policy landscape, HB433/SB239 would remove outdated rules from our state's books and return treatment decisions to patients and their clinicians. We commend lawmakers for recognizing the changing regulatory environment and adjusting state regulations accordingly to ensure access to evidence-based treatment that saves lives. **As such, we support HB433/SB239 and urge the committee to advance this legislation.**

We greatly appreciate the opportunity to comment on this important matter. Please contact me at lengeriser@altapointe.org if there is any further assistance that our organization can provide. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

J. Luke Engeriser, MD

J. Luke Engeriser, MD, FASAM
President, Alabama Society of Addiction Medicine

CC: The Honorable Craig Lipscomb
The Honorable Laura Hall
The Honorable Phillip Rigsby
The Honorable Wes Kitchens
The Honorable Arnold Mooney
The Honorable Neil Rafferty
The Honorable Pebblin W. Warren
The Honorable Jeremy Gray
The Honorable Jeff Sorrells
The Honorable Rhett Marques
The Honorable David Cole
The Honorable Susan DuBose
The Honorable Frances Holk-Jones
The Honorable Mark Shirey

ⁱ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2022). Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT). SAMHSA.gov. <https://www.samhsa.gov/medication-assisted-treatment>

ⁱⁱ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2023). Removal of DATA Waiver (X-Waiver) Requirement. SAMHSA. <https://www.samhsa.gov/medications-substance-use-disorders/removal-data-waiver-requirement>