



Tennessee Society of Addiction Medicine

A Chapter of American Society of Addiction Medicine

March 18, 2025

The Honorable Paul Bailey, Chairman
Senate Commerce and Labor Committee
600 Dr. Martin L. King, Jr. Blvd.
Nashville, TN 37243

Re: TNSAM's Support for HB1049/SB1208

Dear Chairman Bailey and Senate Commerce and Labor Committee Members,

On behalf of the Tennessee Society of Addiction Medicine (TNSAM), the medical specialty society representing physicians and clinicians in Tennessee who specialize in the treatment of addiction, we write today to express our support for HB1049/SB1208. This important legislation would help us respond to the overdose crisis by allowing state licensed telehealth clinicians to establish a patient relationship via telehealth for the treatment of opioid use disorder (OUD) with buprenorphine products.

In Tennessee, the expansion of telehealth in addiction treatment has been vital to increase access to evidence-based treatment for OUD, like buprenorphine. Buprenorphine is an FDA-approved medication to treat OUD, proven to significantly improve health outcomes.¹ When paired with enhanced telehealth capabilities, addiction specialists can safely initiate and maintain treatment with their patients. Increased access to treatment through telehealth is especially beneficial to reach patients in rural areas, underserved communities, and counties without a licensed buprenorphine prescriber. Indeed, surveys indicate that the integration of telehealth into addiction treatment results in greater access to care and convenience for patients.^{2 3}

HB1049/SB1208 would allow state licensed buprenorphine prescribers to offer more options to patients and expand access to lifesaving care. Research has shown that accessibility of medications for OUD through enhanced telemedicine flexibilities has been done safely and responsibly.⁴ Further, telehealth is also associated with improved retention in addiction treatment.^{5 6} Telehealth provides tangible benefits to patients and providers alike. As such, lawmakers should pass HB1049/SB1208 to improve treatment outcomes for people OUD in Tennessee.

Simply put, HB1049/SB1208 would improve our state's response to the overdose crisis and empower clinicians to provide quality care to our patients. **TNSAM strongly supports HB1049/SB1208 and urges all members of the committee to advance this legislation.** Please contact chadelkin@nationaladdictionspecialists.com if you have any questions or concerns. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Chad Elkin, MD, FAACP, DFASAM
President-Elect and Policy Chair, Tennessee Society of Addiction Medicine

CC: The Honorable Senators Taylor, Southerland, Akbari, Johnson, Reeves, Stevens, Watson, & Yager

¹ <https://www.samhsa.gov/substance-use/treatment/options>; ² <https://doi.org/10.1097/adm.0000000000001077>;

³ <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsat.2020.108124>; ⁴ <https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2022.51856>

⁵ <https://doi.org/10.1001/jamapsychiatry.2022.2284>; ⁶ <https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2022.51856>

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