



Academy of
Managed Care
Pharmacy®

April 10, 2018

The Honorable Greg Walden
Chairman
House Committee on Energy and Commerce
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Frank Pallone, Jr.
Ranking Member
House Committee on Energy and Commerce
2322A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 2015

RE: H.R. 3545 – “Overdose Prevention and Patient Safety Act”

Dear Chairman Walden and Ranking Member Pallone:

The Academy of Managed Care Pharmacy (AMCP) is writing in strong support of H.R. 3545 – the “Overdose Prevention and Patient Safety Act”. As you know, H.R. 3545 has bipartisan support and was introduced by Reps. Markwayne Mullin (R-OK), Earl Blumenauer (R-OR), Jim Renacci (R-OH), Buddy Carter (R-GA) and Pat Meehan (R-PA). Under your leadership the Energy and Commerce Committee continues its bipartisan efforts to address the opioid epidemic. We applaud your efforts and are especially supportive of your approach to the problem because you acknowledge that it must be addressed on many fronts. To that end, H.R. 3545 is designed to address the issue of patient substance abuse disorder records by bringing those records under the protection of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

AMCP is the nation’s leading professional association dedicated to increasing patient access to affordable medicines, improving health outcomes and ensuring the wise use of health care dollars. Through evidence- and value-based strategies and practices, the Academy’s 8,000 pharmacists, physicians, nurses and other practitioners manage medication therapies for the 270 million Americans served by health plans, pharmacy benefit management firms, emerging care models and government. AMCP is also a member of the Partnership to Amend 42 CFR Part 2, a coalition of more than 40 organizations representing stakeholders across the health care spectrum committed to aligning Part 2 with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) to allow appropriate access to patient information that is essential for providing whole-person care.

The restrictions implemented by 42 CFR Part 2, under authority granted by a law passed more than 40 years ago, limit the ability of health care providers to implement treatment protocols designed to provide “whole-person” care which includes the use of multi-disciplinary health care provider teams to diagnose and treat patients. Pharmacists, as medication experts, are integral members of those provider teams. However, pharmacists, doctors, nurses and other health care providers do not have complete access to addiction treatment records. Access to a patient’s complete medical record is critical to patient treatment, safety, and recovery.

Of equal concern for patient safety and treatment, is the multitude of unintended consequences of drug to drug interactions, adverse reactions, and even death. Opioids obtained legally, such as those containing oxycodone, and those obtained illegally, such as heroin, may have significant side effects when used with other legally prescribed medications. If a person with an addiction has taken an opioid either legally or illegally and then

receives an additional dose of another opioid, an individual may either experience impairment in their ability to breathe, known as respiratory depression, coma, or even death.

As you know, the opioid epidemic is an ongoing crisis for many patients, their families, the health care system and every state has their “number” of known deaths from overdoses and the mounting toll faced by those suffering from addiction and financial losses resulting from it. By integrating those substance abuse disorder records into a patient’s medical records under HIPAA critical information would be available for treatment, payment and operations, yet safeguards and legal protections are also present to assure patients of privacy.

We urge you to support H.R. 3545 as one of the ways to stem the tide of this deadly and costly epidemic. We must continue to work together and if we can provide additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at 703-684-2600 or at scantrell@amcp.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Susan Cantrell", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Susan A. Cantrell, RPh, CAE
Chief Executive Officer