



Colorado Society of Addiction Medicine

A Chapter of American Society of Addiction Medicine

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February 20, 2024

The Honorable Lindsey Daugherty
Chair
House Committee on Health & Human Services
200 E Colfax Avenue, Old State Library
Denver, CO 80203

**Re: COSAM's Support for HB24-1037 and HB24-1045, Substance Use
Disorders Harm Reduction and Treatment for Substance Use Disorders**

Dear Chair Daugherty:

On behalf of the Colorado Society of Addiction Medicine (COSAM), the medical specialty society representing physicians and clinicians in Colorado specializing in the prevention and treatment of addiction, we write today in support of two bills appearing before the committee: HB24-1037 and HB24-1045. These two important pieces of legislation will reduce harm associated with drug use and expand evidence-based treatment for substance use disorder (SUD). We urge the committee to favorably report both HB24-1037 and HB24-1045. Together, they will meaningfully improve our statewide response to the addiction and overdose epidemic.

HB24-1037 would bolster harm reduction efforts in our state. Specifically, the bill strengthens Good Samaritan protections for the distribution of opioid antagonists (naloxone). Additionally, HB24-1037 further exempts persons from prosecution for possessing drug paraphernalia provided by a syringe service program (SSPs). Overall, we feel that this bill is a positive step to ensure that critical harm reduction supplies, like naloxone and fentanyl test strips, are broadly accessible in our communities. Further, the legislation would reduce potential exposure to the criminal legal system for persons with addiction. Instead, the bill will allow these persons to seek treatment on their terms. Simply put, harm reduction saves lives and increases opportunities for treatment. The provisions of HB24-1037 are evidence-based and will help our state better address the challenges posed by addiction and overdose.

Relatedly, HB24-1045 contains several provisions that would improve the accessibility of treatment for SUD in Colorado. Notably, the bill would prohibit insurance carriers from imposing prior authorization on FDA-approved medications for SUD based solely on the dosage amount. Further, the bill would allow pharmacists practicing under collaborative practice agreements to receive reimbursement for prescribing or administering medications for SUD. Prior authorization is harmful to patients with SUD and can cause delays in obtaining prescriptions. Delays and uncertainty significantly impact patient outcomes.¹ Further, in the age of high dosage synthetic opioid (HPSOs), practitioners must be able to treat patients with a full array of evidence-based tools. As such, higher dosage treatment options should not be restricted to patients who may benefit.² Additionally, the inclusion of pharmacists as an extension of the collaborative care team for the treatment of SUD can further broaden access to treatment at a time of desperate need.

In sum, HB24-1037 and HB24-1045 are important measures to increase access to treatment and save lives. COSAM strongly supports these bills and is grateful to the bill sponsors. **As such, we urge the committee to favorably report HB24-1037 and HB24-1045 and support their advancement.** Please do not hesitate to contact me if there is any other assistance that we can provide.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Stewart MD, MPHS, FASAM
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CC:

The Honorable Mary Young
The Honorable Mary Bradfield
The Honorable Brandi Bradley
The Honorable Kyle Brown
The Honorable Regina English
The Honorable Eliza Hamrick
The Honorable Tim Hernandez
The Honorable Richard Holtorf
The Honorable Sheila Lieder
The Honorable Karen McCormick
The Honorable David Ortiz
The Honorable Ron Weinberg