

December 13, 2017

The Honorable Donald Norcross  
United States House of Representatives  
1531 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Norcross,

On behalf of over 18,000 board-certified orthopaedic surgeons, the American Association of Orthopaedic Surgeons (AAOS) commends you for introducing H.R. 4236, the *Monitoring and Obtaining Needed Information to Track Opioids Responsibly Act of 2017*.

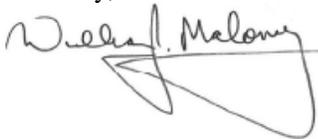
As you know, the United States is in the midst of an epidemic of opioid drug use, misuse, and abuse. It is estimated that the United States consumes 80 percent of the global opioid supply.<sup>1</sup> According to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), more than 50 million Americans were prescribed some type of narcotic pain medication in 2011, which represents a nearly 100 percent increase in narcotic pain medication prescriptions since 2008.<sup>2</sup>

The AAOS acknowledges this growing problem and believes that comprehensive reforms must be initiated with input and assistance from all stakeholders. This includes physicians and other prescribers. For these reasons, the AAOS has been working on a number of initiatives – from public service announcements to a pain relief toolkit – that aim to limit the quantity of opioids on the market and to encourage its members to practice safe and effective pain management and treatment.

The *MONITOR Act* would aid orthopaedic surgeons in addressing this issue by establishing minimum standards that Prescription Drug Monitoring Programs (PDMPs) must meet in order to receive funding from the Account for State Response to the Opioid Crisis. The AAOS supports efforts that would create a uniform electronic format for reporting, increase sharing and disclosing information, create standards for interoperability, and make information available to physicians on a timely basis. By ensuring prescription information relating to opioids and other controlled substances is available in an easy-to-read system, which is interoperable across state lines and available in a timely manner, prescribers will be able to access the most accurate and up-to-date information to help them make the best clinical decisions for their patients.

Again, the AAOS commends the efforts put forth in this legislation to enhance patient safety and strengthen communication between doctors and patients. Please feel free to contact Catherine Hayes, AAOS Senior Manager of Government Relations ([hayes@aaos.org](mailto:hayes@aaos.org)), if you have any questions or if the AAOS can serve as a resource to you.

Sincerely,



William Maloney, MD  
President  
American Association of Orthopaedic Surgeons

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/18443641>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/18443641>