



Midwest Society of Addiction Medicine

A Chapter of American Society of Addiction Medicine

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The Honorable Dr. Robert F. Onder Jr.
Chair, Senate Committee on Health and Pensions
201 West Capitol Avenue
State Capitol, Room 416
Jefferson City, MO 65101

Re: Support for SB521

Dear Chair Onder and members of the Senate Committee on Health and Pensions,

On behalf of the Midwest Society of Addiction Medicine (MWSAM), the medical specialty society representing physicians and other clinicians in Missouri who specialize in the prevention and treatment of addiction, we would like to take this opportunity to provide our support for SB521, which would require that state entities responsible for individuals who are incarcerated provide screening and assessment for substance use disorder (SUD), as well as access to various forms of medications for addiction treatment (MAT). With opioid-involved deaths rising, likely due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is vital that Missourians have access to high-quality, evidence-based and comprehensive addiction treatment.ⁱ

MAT has been shown to reduce recidivism, illegal drug overdose deaths, and infectious disease transmission both inside jails and prisons, but also in the community.ⁱⁱ Furthermore, improving access to addiction treatment for incarcerated individuals is a cost-effective public health measure. The National Institute on Drug Abuse notes that every dollar invested in addiction treatments yields a return of \$4 and \$7 in reduced drug-related crime, criminal justice costs, and theft. When savings related to healthcare are included, total savings can exceed costs by a ratio of 12 to 1.ⁱⁱⁱ

MWSAM would also like to take this opportunity to recommend an amendment to this legislation. The American Board of Preventive Medicine offers a certification in the subspecialty of addiction medicine for which non-psychiatrist physicians are eligible.^{iv} Therefore, MWSAM recommends that the list of healthcare professionals who may assess individuals who are incarcerated for SUD be expanded to include “board certified addiction medicine physicians.”

MWSAM shares the state of Missouri’s goal of improving access to high-quality, evidence-based, and comprehensive addiction treatment services. We offer our support for this bill and urge the legislature to pass it. Please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Evan Schwarz at schwarze@wustl.edu if MWSAM can be of service to you.

Sincerely,

Maria Davila, MD
President, Midwest Society of Addiction Medicine

CC:

The Honorable Andrew Koenig

The Honorable Bill Eigel

The Honorable Holly Rehder

The Honorable Bill White

The Honorable Jill Schupp

The Honorable Barbara Washington

ⁱ American Medical Association. (2020). "Issue brief: Reports of increases in opioid- and other drug-related overdose and other concerns during COVID pandemic." Available at: <https://www.ama-assn.org/system/files/2020-12/issue-brief-increases-in-opioid-related-overdose.pdf>

ⁱⁱ Treatment Research Institute (TRI), Ed. (2011) "Cost & Utilization Outcomes of Opioid- Dependence Treatment." American Journal of Managed Care. Available at:

https://www.ajmc.com/journals/supplement/2011/a369_june11/a369_11jun_alcohol_s235to48

ⁱⁱⁱ National Institute on Drug Abuse. (2018). "Principles of Drug Addiction Treatment: A Research-Based Guide (Third Edition)." Available at: <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/principles-drug-addiction-treatment-research-based-guide-third-edition/frequently-asked-questions/drug-addiction-treatment-worth-its-cost>

^{iv} The American Board of Preventive Medicine. "Addiction Medicine." Available at: <https://www.theabpm.org/become-certified/subspecialties/addiction-medicine/>