

Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**SAFE Glen Cove Coalition: American Medical Association Reports Increased in Opioid Related Overdoses During COVID-19**

As the COVID-19 global pandemic continues, so does the nation's opioid epidemic. The American Medical Association (AMA) has gathered data indicating increases in opioid related mortality from national, state and local data bases. More than 40 states have reported increases in opioid-related mortality as well as ongoing concerns for those with a mental illness or substance use disorder in counties and other areas within the state. This also includes new reports about the need for evidence-based harm reduction services, including sterile needle and syringe services and naloxone.

The AMA acknowledges efforts made by the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) to address this burgeoning concern by providing the increased flexibility of buprenorphine and methadone to patients with opioid use disorder and on behalf of the AMA's Advocacy Resource Center, urges governors and state legislatures to take action in the following areas:

- Governors must adopt the new SAMHSA and DEA rules and guidance in-full for the duration of the national emergency—this includes flexibility for evaluation and prescribing requirements using telemedicine;
- States must enact as part of their own Emergency Orders and other actions a complete removal of prior authorization, step therapy and other administrative barriers for medications used to treat opioid use disorder;
- States must remove existing barriers for patients with pain to obtain necessary medications. This includes removing arbitrary dose, quantity and refill restrictions on controlled substances; and
- States must enact, implement and support harm reduction strategies, including removing barriers to sterile needle and syringe services programs.

The American Medical Association is the largest association of physicians—both MDs and DOs—and medical students in the United States. Its mission is "to promote the art and science of medicine and the betterment of public health." For more information please visit [www.ama-assn.org](http://www.ama-assn.org).

The SAFE Glen Cove Coalition is conducting an opioid prevention awareness campaign entitled. "Keeping Glen Cove SAFE," in order to educate and update the community regarding opioid use and its consequences. To learn more about the SAFE Glen Cove Coalition please follow us on [www.facebook.com/safeglencovecoalition](https://www.facebook.com/safeglencovecoalition) or visit SAFE's website to learn more about the Opioid and COVID -19 Epidemics at [www.safeglencove.org](http://www.safeglencove.org).