



CLAAD Center for Lawful Access
and Abuse Deterrence

May 16, 2012

Representative Gail Haines
Chair, Health Policy Committee
Michigan House of Representatives
Via Email: GailHaines@house.mi.gov

Dear Chairwoman Haines:

The Center for Lawful Access and Abuse Deterrence (CLAAD) is a national, not-for-profit organization working to reduce prescription drug abuse while protecting patient access to care. As a follow up to our in-person meetings in Lansing last month, CLAAD would like to express its support for HB 5643, a bill to require Michigan pharmacists to consult with prescribers before filling a prescription for an abuse-deterrent opioid with a traditional, more readily abused product. We regret that we are not able to send a representative to join you at tomorrow's hearing.

Since 2009, CLAAD's *National Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention Strategy* has encouraged the adoption of technologies to impede the intentional abuse of prescription medications. The *National Strategy* has earned the endorsements of over 30 organizations, including the Drug Free America Foundation, National Family Partnership, American Chronic Pain Association, and NAADAC, the Association for Addiction Professionals. The Federal Government's prescription drug abuse prevention plan also includes support for abuse-deterrent formulations of opioid pain relievers.

HB 5643 is about medications that are easily abused, versus those that are not so easily abused – and how to distinguish between the two.

Our organization is encouraging the manufacturers of both branded and generic opioids to make their products safer. Some companies have already removed their traditional opioids from the market in favor of abuse-deterrent products. As they have done so, their products have disappeared from the news headlines about prescription drug abuse. We expect the first generic abuse-deterrent opioids to come to market within two years.

Our organization's top priority is improving prescriber education. As practitioners learn the value of prescribing abuse-deterrent opioids, it is imperative that pharmacists follow suit and dispense them. HB 5643 will provide Michigan's pharmacists a quick reference to know which *branded and generic* medications incorporate abuse-deterrent technologies. This bill will facilitate – not impede – generic substitution and related cost savings.

HB 5643 will also help break a vicious cycle of inadequate epidemiological data, sooner enabling the FDA do its job of providing more descriptive labeling of these new medications.

Abuse-deterrent medications are just one part of a wide ranging, long-term approach to reducing prescription drug abuse. HB 5643 will speed their adoption by providing incentives for pharmaceutical companies and resources for pharmacists. Please heed the recommendations of the 30 organizations endorsing the *National Strategy*, and act in accordance with federal policy, by approving HB 5643.

Sincerely,

Michael C. Barnes
Interim Executive Director