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Physicians Urge Swift Passage of Bill to Increase Access to Treatment for Opioid Use Disorder

Newark, DE – June 26, 2019 - The Medical Society of Delaware (MSD), Psychiatric Society of Delaware (PSD), American Psychiatric Association (APA), and American Medical Association (AMA) are urging the Delaware Legislature to vote in favor of [House Bill 220 \(HB 220\)](#) to help begin to put an end to health insurer policies of prior authorization barriers for access to medication-assisted treatment (MAT) for opioid use disorder. HB 220 would remove prior authorization for some forms of MAT and ensure MAT is available on the lowest cost-sharing tier for a health plan's formulary, ensuring access to hundreds of Delawareans in need of treatment.

"Delaware's physicians support HB 220 because it will save lives," said MSD President Andrew W. Dahlke, MD. "This is a bill that will remove delays to evidence-based treatment—an essential policy step to reversing our state's opioid epidemic."

"When patients have to wait hours or even days to receive MAT, it places their recovery at risk," said APA President Bruce Schwartz, MD. "In addition to saving lives, MAT helps keep people out of jail, in jobs, and with their families—essential components to whole-person recovery."

"At least one dozen states in the past two years have removed prior authorization for MAT because they have come to see that there is no medical or other reason to delay or deny care for MAT," said AMA President Patrice A. Harris, MD, MA. "We urge the Delaware House of Representatives to approve HB 220 and for the Senate to take immediate action."

This important bipartisan legislation is being championed by the respective House and Senate Health Committee chairs, Rep. David Bentz and Sen. Bryan Townsend. It awaits action on the House floor before it can move to and through the Senate by the closing of legislation action on June 30th.

About the Medical Society of Delaware

The Medical Society of Delaware is one of the oldest institutions of its kind in the United States and rich in history. Founded in 1776 and incorporated on February 3, 1789, The Medical Society of Delaware continues its support of physicians in their vigor and spirit to advance the profession, which was the basis for its creation. Its Mission is "To guide, serve and support Delaware Physicians, promoting the practice and profession of medicine to enhance the health of our communities."

About the Psychiatric Society of Delaware

Incorporated in 1987, the Psychiatric Society of Delaware (PSD) is a district branch of the American Psychiatric Association (APA). PSD is comprised of physicians who work together to ensure humane care and effective treatment for all persons with mental disorders, including intellectual disabilities and substance use disorders. In keeping with APA's values and mission, PSD strives to: Promote the highest quality care for individuals with mental disorders and their families; Promote psychiatric education and research; Advance and represent the profession of psychiatry; Serve the professional needs of its membership.