



September 30, 2021

The Honorable Bronna Kahle  
Chairwoman, House Health Policy Committee  
Members, House Health Policy Committee

Dear Chairwoman Kahle and Committee members:

On behalf of Trinity Health Michigan, we are writing to thank the legislative sponsors of and urge your support for HB 5163, legislation requiring hospitals to implement an emergency-based Medication-Assisted Treatment program and providing for grant-based financial support to hospitals for such programs.

Trinity Health Michigan is comprised of eight hospitals serving twenty-three Michigan counties with more than twenty thousand full time employees. Together with numerous ambulatory care locations, two home health agencies, one hospice agency and twenty-two senior living communities owned and/or operated by Trinity Health, Trinity Health Michigan provides the full continuum of care for Michigan residents.

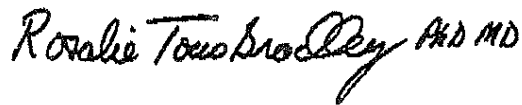
The misuse of opioids has for some years been at epidemic levels in the United States. An estimated 450,000 Americans died in 1999-2016 as a result of opioid related complications. Unfortunately, recent data suggest that after a brief plateau, the COVID 19 pandemic has contributed to a significant resurgence in Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) deaths. The twelve consecutive months ending in May 2021 saw the highest number of drug-related deaths in U.S. history with a 38% increase in opioid related deaths. Buprenorphine is a medication that is often prescribed to treat OUD. This medication reduces cravings and treats the withdrawal symptoms often associated with OUD so that the patient can focus on counseling and recovery. Buprenorphine, which is often prescribed in combination with naloxone and marketed as Suboxone™ has shown to be a highly effective, safe, medication that reduces the risk of death for those persons with an OUD by fifty percent. Initiation of buprenorphine in the Emergency Department, which is the main point of access to healthcare for many persons with OUD, has been increasingly utilized in the past six years with significant success.

A number of Trinity Health Michigan sites received initial Opioid Use Disorder grants through the Michigan Opioid Partnership which provides funding to support development and implementation of clinical treatment pathways in the emergency department. Critically, the grant also provides funding to support the referral process to outpatient treatment centers—which is necessary to facilitate ongoing treatment for those suffering from Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) after they leave the emergency department. This grant is similar in many ways to the proposed legislation and has provided the support needed to successfully initiate OUD

treatment and referral in the emergency department at several Trinity sites in Michigan. The proposed legislation will have the same impact for all participating emergency departments across the state and importantly provides for the needed funding for these programs.

Passage of this legislation will provide for broad access to those suffering from OUD and has the potential to save many lives. Thank you for the opportunity to share our support for House Bill 5163. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have questions and/or concerns regarding our support of this legislation.

Sincerely,



Dr. Rosalie Tocco-Bradley  
Chief Clinical Officer  
Trinity Health Michigan



Dr. Daniel Roper  
Emergency Department  
Mercy Health Saint Mary's