



**RESOLUTION:** # S'18-1

**SUBMITTED BY:** Petrina Craine, M.D.

**SUBJECT:** Opioid Harm Reduction

**Whereas,** Deaths from drug overdoses have become a leading cause of mortality in the United States, with prescription opioid overdoses accounting for more deaths than the combined effect of other drugs, including cocaine, heroin, and other psychostimulants, and

**Whereas,** Emergency medicine physicians prescribe opioids at among the lowest rates of all specialties and have further reduced the amount of opioid prescriptions by more than every other specialty, and

**Whereas,** The number of visits to emergency departments (ED) for nonmedical use of prescription opioids has increased as well as consequences related to opioid use including ED visits for bloodborne pathogens and criminal activity, and

**Whereas,** There has been an increasing public focus on medical and public health providers to utilize multiple strategies to address opioid overdose, which has reached crisis levels, and

**Whereas,** There are numerous studies that have demonstrated cost-effective and successful interventions to reduce harm from opioid use, such as clean syringe access, supervised safe injection programs, medically assisted treatment with medications such as buprenorphine, and community distribution of naloxone, and

**Whereas,** Several emergency department programs have already begun to employ proven strategies to address opioid use in their patient populations, and

**Resolved,** that EMRA

- believes that practitioners of emergency medicine can play a leading role in reducing opioid abuse and death
- should support research efforts geared toward opioid harm reduction
- should encourage training for residents regarding safe and appropriate use of opioids
- should support streamlining requirements for buprenorphine prescribing in the emergency department
- should support adoption of proven strategies in opioid harm reduction including enhanced public distribution of naloxone and increased patient awareness and access to syringe exchange programs
- advocate for similar policies to be held and updated by the American College of Emergency Physicians.

## **References**

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**EMRA Policy:** None

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