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in Emergency Medicine

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July 27, 2005

The Honorable Jeff Sessions  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Sessions:

The American Academy of Emergency Medicine (AAEM) strongly supports S.518, the **Nationals All Schedules Prescription Electronic Reporting Act of 2005**. We applaud your leadership for introducing this legislation providing funds to states to establish a new or support an existing state-controlled substance monitoring program. AAEM represents more than 4,000 board certified emergency medicine physicians whose clinical decisionmaking would benefit from a central repository of retrievable patient records on prescriptions issued for controlled substances.

It is not uncommon to prescribe a controlled substance (e.g., narcotic medications for pain management) in the emergency practice environment. People use emergency departments (EDs) for numerous immediate care needs and, typically, the use is for legitimate reasons. However, concern does exist among physicians about quality of care for that cohort of patients who may be frequenting the EDs because they are addicted to a medication and are seeking another prescription. Currently, those ED doctors who practice in states that do not operate prescription drug monitoring programs often have to make several calls to various dispensers in order to determine whether a patient might be inappropriately frequenting an ED to request controlled substances. The type of database proposed under S.518 would be an effective tool to assist the ED professional in readily identifying drug-seeking behavior, prior to prescribing a controlled substance.

AAEM looks forward to the enactment of S.518 and offers its resources to bring this legislation to reality. If we can be of further assistance, please feel free to contact Kathleen Ream, AAEM's Director of Government Affairs, at 703-241-3974.

Sincerely yours,

A. Antoine Kazzi, MD FAAEM

**AAEM also supported the House companion bill, H.R.1132.**