MEDCHI, THE MARYLAND STATE MEDICAL SOCIETY
HOUSE OF DELEGATES

Resolution 48-18

INTRODUCED BY: Baltimore County Medical Association

SUBJECT: Listing Methadone on the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program

Whereas, Methadone is one of the 3 medications used in Medication-Assisted Treatments for Opioid Addiction in Opioid Treatment Programs in the US (the others being Buprenorphine and Naltrexone); and

Whereas, Methadone has been intensely studied for this purpose since 1964 and is the oldest drug used for this purpose; and

Whereas, according to SAMHSA it “has been used for decades to treat people who are addicted to heroin and narcotic pain medicines. When taken as prescribed, it is safe and effective. It allows people to recover from their addiction and to reclaim active and meaningful lives.”; and

Whereas it works by “(lessening) the painful symptoms of opiate withdrawal and blocks the euphoric effects of opiate drugs such as heroin, morphine and codeine, as well as semi-synthetic opioids like oxycodone and hydrocodone.”; and

Whereas, “Patients taking methadone to treat opioid addiction must receive the medication under the supervision of a physician … and through an opioid treatment program certified by SAMHSA”3; and

Whereas, although Methadone is effective when used to treat opioid addictions, it, itself, is also addicting and is sought after by addicts not in treatment when their preferred drug of use may not be available or in the quantity usually used; and

Whereas, “other medications may interact with methadone and cause heart conditions”4; and

Whereas, because of its longer duration of action taking some medications outside the program can have a greater risk of unintended overdoses; and

Whereas, under Maryland law a treating physician cannot determine if a patient who comes to him/her and requests Methadone for a legitimate medical complaint is already being treated in a Opioid Treatment Program on Methadone unless the patient confides that information to the doctor because the Methadone Treatment Clinics have been specifically exempted from reporting to the MD PDMP; and

Whereas, neither, of the other medications used in Medication-Assisted Treatments for Opioid Addiction in Opioid Treatment Programs, i.e. Buprenorphine and Naltrexone, have such a
Resolved, that MedChi work legislatively, and in regulation, that the prescribing of Methadone by all medical providers and treatment programs be included in the PDMP database so that physicians who are caring for patients in pain practices and opiate treatment programs can find out if anyone else may be prescribing this medication to their patients to prevent diversion and also to prevent possible adverse medical consequences.

At its meeting on September 22, 2019, the House of Delegates referred Resolution 48-18 to the Board of Trustees with a request for a report back at the Fall 2019 meeting.

References
2. ibid.
3. ibid.
4. ibid.