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SPORTS MEDICINE
RECONSTRUCTIVE AND ARTHROSCOPIC
KNEE AND SHOULDER SURGERY

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The Honorable Joe Pitts
United States House of Representatives
420 Cannon House Office Building
Washington D.C. 20515-3006

The Honorable Gene Green
United States House of Representatives
2470 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-4327

Re: HR 3014

Dear Chairman Pitts and Ranking Member Green:

Please accept this letter of strong support for HR 3014. This is an important issue to athletes, athletic trainers, and team physicians. The following brief discussion highlights the reasons for my strong support of this bill:

ISSUES-

The Controlled Substances Act of 1970 prohibits the transportation and storage of controlled substances away from the site of storage that is registered with the DEA. This makes it illegal for team doctors to "black bag" a limited quantity of critical medications that might be needed for pain control or emergency management of life threatening medical problems while travelling with their teams.

For decades, there was no awareness that this practice was in violation of Federal Law, and team physicians did travel with such limited quantities of medications that were appropriate for rendering a high level of medical care to their players while travelling. The DEA either overlooked this or was unaware of this practice until several years ago, and now is strictly and aggressively

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enforcing the law. This has made it impossible to travel with controlled substances, yet there are times such as during air travel or on a bus, when the team physician is the only medical person available to render care. Some domestic flights are 5 hours, and this is a real issue. There are documented cases of a player seizing on a flight, and in such a situation, controlled substances are needed to break a life threatening seizure. Additionally, it is humane care to allow a player to take a pain pill in the event that he has a broken bone and is flying back home to where his support group is. You should understand that athletes who play contact sports and then fly home on the same day are at much greater risk of having an urgent medical problem than is the usual flying public. These scenarios are part of the weekly occurring amateur and professional sports commerce that occurs across our country.

Simple Solution-

HR 3014 offers legislative relief to allow excellent medical care of athletes of many levels. It is reasonable and even common sense to allow a small quantity of controlled substance (less than 10 pain pills and one vial of anticonvulsive medication) to be in a locked "black bag" in the possession of the team physician for a short time during travel to cover away games. It should be noted that these medications are registered and subject to inspection by the DEA at any time. They could be signed out from the stored supply at the site of DEA registration. They would never be exempted from proper record keeping or inspection by the DEA.

Military flight surgeons and rural large animal veterinarians have exemption and are able to carry the medications they need. Please recognize that collegiate and professional contact sports are much more dangerous than non-combat military maneuvers, and that this issue applies to the constituents of all congressmen in all states. Simply said, the athletes who are your constituents and often the children of your supporters, deserve at least the same level of care that Congress affords our nation's military personnel and large animals!

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Please join us with your full support of a simple piece of legislation that will allow team physicians to provide the highest level of appropriate medical care to the injured athlete.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Daniel E. Cooper, MD". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and "C".

Daniel E. Cooper, MD
Head Team Physician - Dallas Cowboys Football

DEC:ml