



May 25, 2011

The Honorable Felipe Fuentes
Chair, Assembly Appropriations Committee
State Capitol, Room 2114
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 369

Dear Mr. Fuentes:

On behalf of the Southern California American Society for Pain Management Nursing (ASPMN) board and members, this letter is submitted in continued support of AB 369. The ASPMN's mission is to advance and promote optimal care for people affected by pain by promoting best nursing practice. This is accomplished through education, research, standards and advocacy. ASPMN's goals are access to quality care, public awareness, professional resources, education and professional recognition. More information about the organization and its members may be found at www.aspmn.org.

Step therapy (aka "fail first"), a practice used by health insurance companies, is not in any patient's best interest. It creates barriers to appropriate, timely and effective patient care. Patients may have to "fail" up to five times before they are finally given the medication best suited to their medical condition. Patients who must "fail" in order to get effective treatment suffer in pain that can be relieved with the right medication. This is unethical and unreasonable to ask the patient to wait in pain when step therapy protocols are rigidly applied and allow insurance company policies to override the decision of medical professionals.

AB 369 will help ensure that people who must live with pain from any cause can expect timely and appropriate treatments. It also helps to ensure it is the healthcare professionals rather than healthcare policies that make decisions about what is best for any individual person.

Nearly 80 million Americans suffer from pain, which is more than diabetes, heart disease and cancer combined. The annual cost of chronic pain is estimated to be \$100 billion nation-wide, including healthcare expenses, lost income and lost productivity. Responsible studies find that adults with pain have worse health status and have more disability, missed workdays, activity limitations, reduced sleep and increased psychological distress than those without pain

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True healthcare cost savings can be realized with bills like AB 369 because people will have the best treatment to recover faster and be more likely to return to productive activities. Now is the right time to lift unnecessary burden and suffering for Californian's in pain.

Thank you for authoring this legislation.

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