

AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR
Pain Management

Nursing

P.O. Box 15473 ❖ Lenexa, Kansas 66285-5473 ❖ 913/895-4606 ❖ aspmn@goamp.com

August 20, 2008

Dear Governor Gregoire,

The American Society for Pain Management Nursing (ASPMN), whose mission is to advance and promote optimal nursing care for people affected by pain by promoting best nursing practice and who succeeds in this through education, standards, advocacy, and research, stands ready to work with lawmakers to advance programs and policy that will also help us accomplish this. It is estimated that as many as 70 million people, are affected by chronic pain. Providing patient's access to all officially recognized and accepted chronic pain therapies can play an important role in improving their quality of life.

It has come to our attention that in Washington State, injured workers are often denied coverage by the Department of Labor and Industries to pain therapies involving spinal cord stimulation and intrathecal drug delivery. Washington is the only state in the nation where the state run workers' compensation program has taken a non-coverage approach.

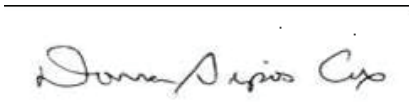
Intrathecal drug delivery, introduced in 1988, offers a method of delivering drugs to the spinal area where pain receptors are located. This therapy offers a potential for a lower dose of drugs potentially minimizing side effects. Intrathecal drug delivery can reduce levels of needed morphine in some cases up to 300%.

Even though injured workers covered by the state's workers' compensation program are typically denied access to these devices, injured patients enrolled with the state's Health Care Authority or Medicaid programs are granted access to the life improving therapies. Medicare recipients enjoy positive national coverage policies on both therapies. And all major private insurers in the state also provide for coverage.

To correct the inequities in coverage, and to meet the intent of the recently passed Evidence-Based Medicine for Medical Technologies law (Chapter 307, laws of 2006), we ask that there be standardization and uniformity in these coverage policies amongst Washington State agencies to allow for intrathecal drug delivery to be covered as one of the treatment options.

We thank you for considering our request.

Sincerely,



Donna Sipos Cox, MSN, RN-BC, ONC, CCRC

ASPMN President