



American Pain Foundation
A United Voice of Hope and Power over Pain

November 7, 2011

ATTN: Washington State House Committee on Health Care and Wellness

Dear Committee Members:

National, state and local organizations that support the pain community are gravely concerned about the rapid deterioration of access to pain care and treatment options in Washington state. Recent policy decisions have created or contributed to a state of crisis for people with pain and their loved ones.

People are speaking out about their inability to find a pain care provider, abrupt changes to or abandonment of successful pain therapies, or being turned away from health clinics or emergency rooms. Washington state is suffering from a pain care access crisis and we cannot wait another day to take action. More and more, people with pain have nowhere to turn and no treatment options available:

- 70% of WA state community health clinics refuse to treat people with pain
- Pain care providers, including pain specialists, are increasingly concerned about new regulations and their increased liability
- WA state Health Care Authority denied coverage for many proven pain care technologies
- WA state Medicaid has reduced and, in some cases, eliminated access to pain care therapies and medications

There are numerous organizations, both national and local, that wish to convey the current pain care climate in the state of Washington to policymakers who can effect change.

We ask the Washington State House Committee on Health Care and Wellness to schedule an emergency hearing on Barriers to Pain Care Access in Washington State in December 2011. We request that this hearing include diverse public comment from patients, providers, payers, lawmakers, state entities, and advocacy organizations. We hope that this meeting will lead to the formation of an emergency task force to address the problem of pain care access in Washington state.

Please direct your response to Will Rowe, CEO, American Pain Foundation. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely yours,

[Organizations supporting, inserted here]

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