



June 28, 2018

Peter C. Schwartzkopf, Speaker of the House
Delaware House of Representatives
411 Legislative Avenue
Dover, DE 19901

RE: Support SB 225

Dear Mr. Speaker and Honorable Members of the House of Representatives:

I am writing on behalf of the Academy of Integrative Pain Management (formerly American Academy of Pain Management), the nation's largest pain management organization, and U.S. Pain Foundation, the nation's leading patient advocacy organization, to strongly support SB 225, an act that prohibits numerical limits on physical therapy and chiropractic care, which might deter prescribers or patients from using those treatments rather than opioids. Further, the act would ensure that practitioners understand when these treatments are indicated for particular patients by adding continuing education requirements for prescribers relating to risks of opioids and alternatives to opioids. Finally, and of vital importance in improving the future care of people with pain, the act creates a pilot program within the state employee health care plan that allows the use of massage therapy, acupuncture, and yoga for the treatment of back pain. **On behalf of the 1 in 3 Americans living with chronic pain, including many in the state of Delaware, we support Senate Bill 225 in its effort to provide coverage of non-opioid and non-pharmacologic treatments for pain. To further strengthen this proactive legislation, we ask that the committee consider also including individuals whose pain may be the result of the complex disease of chronic pain, rather than just those with back pain.**

We applaud you for recognizing the importance of ensuring access to quality and affordable health care, as well as to a full range of licensed health care professionals. Similar to other chronic conditions like diabetes and high blood pressure, chronic pain isn't typically cured, but is managed with a combination of therapies and approaches specific to the individual. Thus, effective, high-quality pain care often requires multiple providers and multiple interventions to help people with pain achieve optimal wellness. However, this kind of interdisciplinary integrative pain care is uncommon, in part because services other than traditional allopathic medical care are often poorly reimbursed and in part because these services are often in short supply in rural and other underserved areas. **If we are to optimally treat the 100 million Americans living with pain while reducing the prescription drug overdose epidemic, we must increase access to alternative forms of treatment, including chiropractic care, physical therapy, massage therapy, and more.**

Support for integrative pain care has been growing in recent years. The Department of Veterans Affairs and Department of Defense support this approach to treatment, their own guidelines stating

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that there is sufficient evidence on physical manipulative therapy (osteopathic and chiropractic), acupuncture, massage, biofeedback, and yoga to deem them effective treatments for pain. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has stated that nonpharmacologic therapy and nonopioid pharmacologic therapy are preferred for chronic pain and has recommended that when opioids are used, they should be combined with nonpharmacologic therapy and nonopioid pharmacologic therapy, as appropriate. Despite the wider recognition and adoption of integrative medicine, group health plans and health insurers have discriminated against complementary and alternative service providers when it comes to reimbursement, compared to reimbursement of conventional medical providers—ensuring coverage for chiropractic care and physical therapy will help to make these non-pharmacologic options truly accessible to people living with pain.

While we support the bill as it is currently written, we encourage the committee to amend the existing language to open up the pool of patients who would qualify for these treatment options to be covered by their health plans. While back pain is certainly a debilitating condition for many Americans, chronic pain is a national epidemic which is often overlooked and undertreated. Denying all forms of proper care for Delaware individuals living with chronic pain and illness is unethical and can lead to unnecessary suffering, depression, disability and even suicide. We strongly encourage an amendment to include chronic pain or any other condition a prescriber believes would benefit his or her patient from receiving chiropractic and physical therapy treatment. Further, we would request that the Health and Human Development committee consider an amendment which would deter insurance plans from placing this therapy option into a more restrictive tier or considering a “copay cap” provision so that a patient’s treatment for each visit may not exceed a specific dollar amount. Our organizations believe that regulating insurance cost containing protocols in this particular legislation would allow more patients to participate in being treated by licensed chiropractors and physical therapists within Delaware.

We respectfully urge you to vote to pass SB 225. If you or your staff have any questions, or if you would like to discuss any of these issues further, please feel free to contact Katie Duensing at by telephone at 209-288-2214 or at kduensing@integrativepain.org.

Respectfully submitted,

Katie Duensing, J.D.

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About AIPM: The Academy of Integrative Pain Management is the premier organization for all clinicians who care for people with pain. It is the largest pain management organization in the nation and the only one that embraces, as part of its mission statement, an integrative model of care, which: is patient-centered; considers the whole person; encourages healthful lifestyle changes as part of the first line of treatment to restore wellness; is evidence-based; brings together all appropriate

therapeutic approaches to reduce pain and achieve optimal health and healing; and, encourages a team approach.

About U.S. Pain Foundation: The mission of U.S. Pain Foundation is to educate, connect, inform and empower those living with pain while also advocating on behalf of the entire pain community. As a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to serving those who live with pain conditions and their care providers, U.S. Pain Foundation helps individuals find resources and inspiration.

cc:

Representative Valerie Longhurst, House Majority Leader

Representative John J. Viola, House Majority Whip

Representative Helene M. Keeley, Speaker Pro Tempore

Representative Daniel B. Short, House Minority Leader

Representative Deborah Hudson, House Minority Whip