



June 26, 2018

Honorable Members of Senate:

Health, Education, Labor & Pensions

United States Senate

Washington, DC 20510

Dear Honorable Members of the Senate Health, Education, Labor & Pensions Committee:

We, the undersigned, commend you for your leadership and commitment to combating the overdose crisis and admirably reigning in the “pill mills” of the 1990’s. As you know we have an ever-increasing overdose crisis; with deaths increasing 2012-2018 despite a 65% reduction in opioid prescriptions - largely attributed to heroin and illegal illicit fentanyl.

We are encouraged that the Senate Health, Education, Labor & Pensions Committee is taking steps to combat the overdose crisis; however, we are deeply concerned for the lack of efforts to ensure the legislation put forth protects the chronically ill and disabled access to appropriate medical care - including life-sustaining opioid analgesics.

Our legislators have taken extraordinary measures in responding to the overdose crisis with 58 opioid related pieces of legislation passing the house on June 11, 2018. Honorable Members of the Committee, you are now tasked with the duty to ensure the laws passed by the Senate to combat drug abuse do not *further impede* access to vital medications nor allow infringement upon our freedoms of privacy and safety in the doctor-patient relationship.

Chronic Illness Advocacy & Awareness Group, dba CIAAG
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H.R. 6 SUPPORT Act in part would give the government and other third-party organizations access to patients' private healthcare information in direct violation of patients' HIPAA rights, doctor-patient confidentiality, and most importantly the Hippocratic oath. In addition, the bills would grant the DEA arbitrary power in influencing access to medication for millions of Americans. There are 110,000,000 chronically in pain; of which 26,000,000 are chronically ill and disabled whom require some sort of 24-hour pain control in our country. Therefore, one-third of our population's health and well-being must be considered heavily in moving forward with these bills as improper implementation could severely impact a large portion of the American public's health and safety.

Opioid Analgesics are a complementary therapy required for treated complex illnesses and diseases. Arbitrary removal of this medication from patients with these conditions is a direct violation of our human rights.

Therefore, Chronic Illness Advocacy and Awareness Group asks that should any legislation regarding access to opioid analgesics be passed, they must include our proposed amendment to protect the chronically ill from any undue bodily harm or mental and emotional duress.

Chronic Illness Advocacy and Awareness Group and the undersigned propose the following amendment added to United States H.R.6

"Equal & Fair Access to Palliative Care"

1. A universal definition for palliative care - which would treat the symptoms of the individual's primary illness and/or condition as determined by a qualified and licensed physician.
2. Further, we propose individuals suffering with incurable illnesses and diseases are exempted properly from the 2016 CDC Opioid Prescribing guidelines- which are written for *primary care settings* only. This would allow patients to access a coordinated care team to provide the individualized treatments each patient requires.

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We are facing an unprecedented time of discrimination in our society; The bills set forth to combat the “Opioid Crisis” are creating direct discriminatory policies toward the most vulnerable in our society: the chronically ill and disabled. Thank you, for taking this great duty to ensure the health and safety of the American public, whether that be those suffering with substance use disorder, chronic illness/disease, or behavioral health. When making these decisions we must ensure that we are not sacrificing one citizen in favor of another.

Regards,

Lauren Deluca
President & Founder
Chronic Illness Advocacy & Awareness Group, Inc., dba CIAAG

Undersigned:

Adrenal Alternatives

Chiari Fund

Central Pain Nerve Center

Chronic Disease Coalition

Endometriosis Research Center

Gastroparesis – Fighting for Change

National Pancreas Foundation

Medical Bill Gurus

Migraine Mantas

RSDSA

The Unchargeables

World of Pain

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