



March 24, 2015

The Honorable Claire Ayer
Chair, Senate Committee on Health & Welfare
Vermont Senate
Vermont State House Room 17
115 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05633

Dear Senator Ayer:

The Alliance for Patient Access (AfPA) is a national organization of nearly 700 physicians working together to ensure their patients have access to approved therapies and appropriate clinical care. Since its founding nearly a decade ago, AfPA has commented on numerous health care policies that impact patient access and safety. AfPA writes in support of S. 59, legislation that facilitates access to abuse-deterrent formulations of pain medicines.

Pain, the costs associated with pain, and the problem of opioid pain medication abuse pose significant challenges for policymakers across the United States. Abuse-deterrent formulations of opioid analgesics do not offer a panacea for abuse and diversion. Yet they do represent a useful part of an overall, multifaceted policy solution.

By deterring individuals who want to crush or dissolve pain medications, abuse-deterrent formulations can limit certain forms of misuse. For specific patient populations, particularly patients who live with former or current abusers or with teenagers who might seek these medications for recreational use, these formulations provide unique value.

Thus, public policy should facilitate their physician-directed use. In particular, safeguards should exist to prevent the patient's pharmacist from dispensing a traditional version of the pain medication if the physician considers an abuse-deterrent form necessary.

Likewise, insurance policies should acknowledge physicians' judgment about which formulation a patient needs. Imposing prior authorization requirements or "fail first" policies to deter physicians from prescribing abuse-deterrent formulations does not serve patients' best interests.

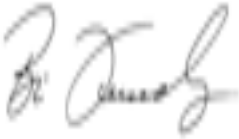
Insurance coverage policies must also support patients' need for these formulations. Payers should offer coverage that's equally favorable to that provided for traditional formulations.

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Moreover, exorbitant cost-sharing requirements should not be used to price patients out of access to abuse-deterrent formulations.

Please work with your colleagues to pass S. 59. Equipping patients to avoid prescription pain medication misuse is an important step toward curbing abuse in Vermont.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brian Kennedy". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Brian" and last name "Kennedy" clearly distinguishable.

Brian Kennedy
Executive Director, Alliance for Patient Access

CC: Senate Health and Welfare Committee
Sen. Lyons, Sen. Pollina, Sen. Kessler, Sen. McCormack, Sen. Collamore