



March 17, 2015

Senate Committee on Health and Welfare
Vermont State House
115 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05633-5301

Dear Chairman Ayer and Co-Chairman Lyons,

I am writing in support S. 59 - An act relating to insurance coverage for abuse-deterrent formulations of certain medications. This bill would require insurance companies to cover abuse deterrent formulation, or ADF, medications at the same level as traditional pain medications. Due to the way ADF medications are developed, the drugs cannot be crushed, injected or otherwise altered to achieve a high. Abuse-deterrent opioids will not be the sole solution, but U.S. Pain Foundation believes they can play an important role as part of a comprehensive approach in Vermont that addresses misuse and abuse from prevention to treatment.

The January 2014 CBS National News segment, *Vermont Faces Opiate Drug Abuse Crisis*, highlighted some alarming statistics:

- Since the year 2000, Vermont has seen nearly an 800 percent increase in opiate drug abuse.
- Heroin overdose deaths in Vermont have almost doubled.
- Close to 4,000 local residents are in drug treatment for opioids.

Why put insurer barriers in front of patients and doctors for something that is aimed at preventing prescription abuse and misuse? For this reason, I ask for your support of S. 59.

Abuse deterrents do make an impact. According to the 2013 Journal of Pain, after introduction of the reformulated abuse-deterrent version of OxyContin® into the market, researchers found that abuse rates dropped across a range of patient types and insurers, including:

- 49% decrease in abuse among a subset of opioid abusers
- 41% decrease in abuse among all individuals
- 22% decrease in abuse among commercially insured

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- 18% decrease in abuse among Medicaid patients

The FDA considers the development of abuse-deterrent formulations to be a public health priority and is encouraging their development. While ADF medications are not the only tools that should be used to stem the rising tide of prescription drug abuse, the technology should be on the front line in that fight.

The U.S. Pain Foundation works across the country every day to support and advocate for the needs of those living with chronic pain to have access to the medications their doctors prescribe. We also work to make sure those who choose to abuse these medications can't do so. We support restricting access to those who are abusing while keeping those who are in compliance away from penalty or stigma.

Again, I ask for your support of S. 59 - An act relating to insurance coverage for abuse-deterrent formulations of certain medications. Massachusetts was the first state in the nation to pass similar legislation. Vermont should take steps to reduce manipulation and diversion by ensuring access to and use of abuse-deterrent opioids. As a pain patient myself, I see ADF technology as a way to help put a stop to the unnecessary abuse of critical medications, while not penalizing those who have legitimate need for pain relief.

Respectfully Submitted,

Paul Gileno

Paul Gileno
President and Founder
US Pain Foundation

Cc: Sen. Anthony Pollina
Sen. Dick McCormack
Sen. Brian Collamore, Clerk