

March 27, 2019

Senate Committee on Health Care  
The Honorable Senator Laurie Monnes Anderson, Chair

RE: Support for Senate Bill 887

Chair Monnes Anderson and Members of the Senate Committee on Healthcare,

I am writing to urge your support of Senate Bill 887. In a time when more and more people are seeking not only pain relief but also prevention of disease, acupuncture is uniquely poised to help. Many medical systems are already bogged down with administration needs which is aimed at providing quality care. This care is provided by highly trained individuals who need to focus on their skills to serve our community. At this time, there are increasing administrative obstacles to providing this care. Many individuals with acupuncture coverage through their own private health care insurance are limited by administration. Requiring a pre-authorization prevents providers from establishing urgent and necessary treatments and treatment planning. Many folks in our community, especially those suffering, simply cannot afford to run around to multiple appointments before finally receiving care. This drains their out-of-pocket coverage options and deductibles. Granted the state of health insurance is dismal. So many patients come in only after everything else they have tried has failed. At this point they are desperate for care. One plan, Evicore, allows for us to give one treatment then they have to return to their primary to authorize another 2 treatments, which may take weeks before they can return.

I have one patient in particular that has been through the gamut of medical providers before finally resigning to “try” acupuncture. Having seen hundreds of patients, I knew acupuncture would help greatly. Unfortunately, the coverage was limit by pre-authorization even though her insurance covered acupuncture. What could have been a 6-week plan to reduce her pain by half, we are limited by the availability of her primary’s schedule and their administrative processes.

When we can deliver the care their own insurance covers, we are sure to have a greater impact on the care needs of our community.

I urge you to vote yes for this bill. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Bryon Leverman  
Licensed Acupuncturist