

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 Health Care,

I am writing to urge your support of Senate Bill 887. I have had chronic neck and shoulder pain for over a decade and massage therapy and acupuncture has completely changed my life these past 12 months. I can breathe again and live my life with much needed relief. Before receiving treatment, simple day to day tasks were painful. Now that I am receiving treatment, it has helped me change my lifestyle dramatically. I am running and exercising again because it is not painful. I am eating better and feeling better. My mood has changed dramatically and I find myself enjoying life so much more.

I am grateful that my insurance benefit includes acupuncture. However, in the course of pursuing treatment, I have encountered barriers to care due to prior authorization requirements. Given the time it takes to submit this prior authorization request and obtain approval from my insurer, I have had to come in for an initial evaluation and then return on a separate day. Due to my chronic pain condition and the realities of a busy lifestyle, this has presented a real barrier to accessing effective treatments.

SB 887 would help address this issue by allowing patients like me to more easily access their acupuncture benefit. SB 887 would allow me to receive initial evaluation and up to 6 acupuncture treatments up to the maximum number allowed under the plan benefit for each episode of care. If additional treatments are needed, the insurer could require a prior authorization.

This bill would allow me to receive the treatment I need in a timely manner. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jamie McMullen