



2365 Grear St NE Salem, OR 97301  
Phone: 971-273-7177 Fax: 971-273-6658

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 studied to be an acupuncturist because I understand the positive impact it can have on patients' wellbeing. Acupuncture is a relatively low-cost treatment that can be used for a variety of diagnoses, including pain, stress, and addiction. Especially now, when opioid abuse has become an epidemic in Oregon and the U.S., acupuncture is an evidence-based alternative that provides real relief to patients experiencing chronic pain. I have worked with stroke patients, motor vehicle accident clients, people in acute pain and people with chronic pain. Acupuncture is effective in many ways that has made my clients believers that there are more ways to treat pain than by opioids alone.

When the 3<sup>rd</sup> party administrator only offers 1, 2 or 3 treatments for the ½ hour we spent charting and sending notes to get an authorization we are spending too much time for the small return. This creates an unnecessary burden on providers. Studies show that patients usually need 6-12 treatments to demonstrate efficacy and hold the treatment.

Our office hires 1 full-time staff person for our 5 practitioners to handle authorizations and insurance questions. Most acupuncturists don't have that luxury and spend at least 10 hours/month just on authorizations.

We lose ground in our treatment strategies when a patient gets 1 treatment, then has to wait for authorization, and then it is 2 weeks before the patient can get in again- whether it is waiting for the paperwork or waiting for our schedule to open up. We can't schedule out because we are constantly going back and asking for crumbs in the form of 1-2 treatments authorized at a time.

With the mandate for reducing the opiate crises, acupuncturists are an excellent option for helping clients manage their pain and retain their quality of life. There are many more patients that need our services and we are bottlenecked by the 3<sup>rd</sup> party authorizations that create more paperwork and less time in the treatment room.



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Every new layer of administration cut into an already narrow margin and threatens the existence of small businesses. SB 887 would help address this issue by allowing patients to use their acupuncture benefit as a low-cost treatment and prevent the need for costlier interventions.

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

Sincerely,

Travis Brueckner, L.Ac.  
AC 186260  
Earth-Moon Acupuncture  
2365 Grear St NE  
Salem OR 97301