



Joint Committee on Financial Services
Massachusetts Pain Initiative Testimony

Dear Chairman Crighton, Chairman Murphy and Honorable Members of the Committee:

The Massachusetts Pain Initiative (MassPI) is a statewide, non-profit organization dedicated to improving the quality of life for people suffering from pain. We would like to express **our strong support for Senate Bill 687, An Act relative to removing barriers to non-opioid pain management and its companion, House Bill 1060.**

Pain is the most common reason Americans access the health care system. A survey conducted by MassPI and reported in the *Boston Globe*, found that one in four adults in Massachusetts suffers from serious, persistent pain that interferes with their daily life and ability to work. The study also found that most of these pain sufferers had difficulty finding effective care for their pain. In September 2018, and again this past November, the National Institutes of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that approximately 50 million Americans live with chronic pain and approximately 20 million of those live with high-impact chronic pain that interferes with their ability to function on a daily basis. Uncontrolled pain can devastate a person's quality of life, affecting all aspects of daily functioning including sleep, work, social activities and relationships.

In the context of the opioid crisis many people with chronic pain are struggling to access care. Those that were maintained on stable doses of opioid pain medication have been tapered off their medication due to doctors' fear of scrutiny for prescribing. We, at MassPI, hear regularly from patients who have been dropped from care completely and are having difficulty finding a doctor to treat them. Many primary care practices do not want to take on chronic pain patients. Doctors simply do not know what to offer pain patients and do not have the time it takes to properly manage their conditions.

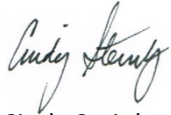
There is no cure for chronic pain and in most cases no single treatment that will substantially reduce the pain. Pain control is a matter of combining several pharmacological and non-pharmacological treatments to get the pain down to a manageable level, often referred to as a multimodal, integrative approach. The particular combination of treatments is different for each person with pain. Consequently, people with pain need access to a broad range of treatments to try.

Senate Bill 687 proposes to make treatments for pain that are alternatives to opioids now being offered by public and private insurers to comply with the Division of Insurance guidance pursuant to the CARE Act, available to patients with no prior authorization requirements. The removal of prior authorization barriers is critically important for pain patients now who desperately need additional treatment options to control their debilitating pain. It is also hoped that by making primary care providers aware of these new treatment options without the

administrative burden of seeking prior authorization for these treatments, that PCP's will be more inclined to offer these options to chronic pain patients rather than simply tapering them off opioid medication and dismissing them from care altogether.

MassPI is grateful to the committee and to Senator Keenan, and Representative Decker the legislative sponsors of these bills, for their commitment to aid citizens affected by pain. We thank you for considering our views on this matter and respectfully request that you report this bill favorably out of committee.

Sincerely,



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CC: The Honorable Senator John Keenan

CC: The Honorable Representative Majorie Decker