

April 1, 2010

The Honorable William Monning
Chair, Assembly Health Committee
California State Assembly
State Capitol, Room 6005
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Assembly Bill 1826 (Huffman) – SUPPORT

Dear Assembly Member Monning:

On behalf of the California Healthcare Institute (CHI), whose more than 250 members include our state's premier life sciences companies and academic research institutions, I am writing in support of AB 1826, a bill that would provide patients who have medical insurance with access to the correct pain medication to treat chronic pain conditions, such as fibromyalgia, peripheral neuropathy, and AIDS-related neuropathy.

Currently, health care plans and insurers often require that patients being treated for chronic pain use other products than the one prescribed by their doctor first. After a patient has failed several times on alternate products, they may then receive the originally prescribed treatment. This practice is known as step therapy. Patients being treated for chronic pain are often in great distress. The relief they experience when finding the right treatment for their specific condition is undercut by current practices that mandate patients fail on products other than what they have been prescribed before they have access to the correct treatment.

CHI member companies are at the heart of the biomedical research and development that produce pain medications targeted to specific disease states and chronic pain conditions. We have made remarkable progress in targeting specific causes of pain, and have introduced many products to market that are designed for specific root causes of various conditions that cause chronic pain. However, our member company treatments are only effective when patients have access to them. This measure will go great lengths to ensure that patients have access to right treatment at the right time. For these reasons, CHI strongly supports AB 1826.

Sincerely,



Sandra Pizarro
Vice President – State Government Affairs

CC: Chair & Members, Assembly Health Committee
The Honorable Jared Huffman
Assembly Republican Caucus