



March 27, 2019

The Honorable Evan Low
State Capitol, Room 4126
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 888 (Low) Treatments for Pain - SPONSOR

Dear Assemblymember Low:

The California Chiropractic Association (CalChiro) is pleased to sponsor AB 888, which seeks to reduce the over-reliance on prescription opioids by integrating nonpharmacological treatments to pain management care plans and, most importantly, ensures that patients are making well informed decisions before an opioid is prescribed.

Over the last 15 years, there has been a dramatic increase in the acceptance and use of prescription opioids for the treatment of chronic, non-cancer pain despite serious risks and a lack of evidence about their long-term effectiveness. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has estimated that between 1999 and 2016, more than 200,000 people died in the United States from overdoses related to prescription drugs. The CDC also found that in 2016, 116 people died every day from opioid related overdoses and 11.5 million misused prescription opioids. Overdose deaths involving prescription opioids were five times higher in 2016 than in 1999.

The sheer magnitude of America's prescription opioid abuse has evoked visceral responses and calls to action from public and private sectors. Opioid prescribing guidelines, like the CDC's *Guideline for Prescribing Opioids for Chronic Pain*, already recommend the exploration of non-opioid therapeutic options or if opioids are prescribed they should be combined with non-opioid therapies. The California Health Care Foundation's (CHCF) *Changing Course: The Role of Health Plans in Curbing the Opioid Epidemic* states that alternative treatments to opioids, including chiropractic care, have been found to play an important role in the delivery of cost-effective, non-drug services in both acute and chronic stages, as complementary to traditional treatments. The CHCF study notes that some health plans now authorize non-opioid treatment services for select diagnoses and that the cost of these services is offset by savings in opioid prescriptions.

Nonpharmacological treatments, such as chiropractic care is a proven safe, long-term, solution to pain that reduces or eliminates the need for opioids and reduces surgical interventions. The Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) has been implementing specific nonpharmacologic therapies recommended by several clinical guidelines. As noted in *Opioid Use Among Veterans of Recent Wars Receiving Veterans Affairs Chiropractic Care*, a key set of the recommended therapies--spinal manipulation, massage, acupuncture, exercise, and patient education--are the core components of multimodal chiropractic care in the VA. From 2012 to 2016, the number of veterans receiving an opioid for any reason decreased

approximately 25%, and one component of the VA's approach has been expanding access to nonpharmacological pain therapies.

As trained medical professionals and longtime advocates of nonpharmacologic pain management, we strongly support AB 888's mission to increase interdisciplinary approaches to the opioid crisis that will facilitate practices that will not only improve health outcomes but also decrease over-reliance on opioids. In order to adequately address the opioid crisis in California we must look at evidenced based treatment options, like non-pharmacological providers, as well as other mechanisms designed to stop opioid addiction in the first place. CalChiro believes this bill will allow multidisciplinary teams to begin working together to find pain management options that will bend the curve on opioid addiction.

CalChiro is a Sacramento-based statewide, nonprofit organization of doctors of chiropractic and allied industries representing the chiropractic profession. Established in 1928, CalChiro's mission is positioning DC's to improve the quality of life of all Californians.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dawn Benton". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Dawn" being more prominent than the last name "Benton".

Dawn M. Benton, MBA
Executive Director