



February 16, 2018

Senate Finance Committee
Honorable Senator Orrin Hatch
Honorable Senator Ron Wyden
opiods@finance.senate.gov

Dear Senate Committee on Finance Chairman Orrin Hatch and Ranking Member Ron Wyden:

The Acupuncture Now Foundation (ANF) is a U.S. based international non-profit organization dedicated to educating the public, healthcare providers and health policymakers about the practice of acupuncture. We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the Finance Committee leadership's request for stakeholder input to address the opioid crisis.

Acupuncture has been easing pain and suffering for over 2,000 years and in just the last two years alone independent agencies such as the U.S. "Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality", the "Institute for Clinical and Economic Review", and the "American College of Physicians" found acupuncture to be at least as effective and usually more effective than any other pharmaceutical or non-pharmaceutical therapy for low back pain. There are similar findings of the evidence of acupuncture's effectiveness for several other conditions for which opioids have commonly been prescribed. Reviews of many of those studies are summarized on the ANF's website.

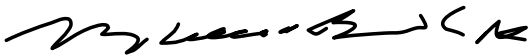
The Senate Committee on Finance could play a leading role in removing a major barrier that is complicating the shift in pain management away from reliance on opioids and other potentially harmful drugs toward a greater use of safer non-pharmaceutical therapies. That barrier is the lack of insurance coverage in Medicare, Medicaid and CHIP programs. As an international educational organization with close working relationships with numerous acupuncture organizations around the world, the ANF is uniquely qualified to work with representatives of your committee on the subject of how evidence-

based and cost effective acupuncture services could be utilized to manage pain and even to treat opioid addiction.

I urge your committee to accept our invitation to work with the acupuncture community in finding ways to break down this barrier to access. You will likely be surprised to learn that acupuncture services have already been vetted and found to be both clinically effective and cost effective by such conservative institutions as the U.S. Armed Forces, dozens of U.S. hospitals, and several forward thinking health plans. Please take the time to work with us to gain an understanding of acupuncture's potential as a pain management resource. To not do so in this age of the opioid epidemic would be missing an opportunity make a positive difference.

The ANF and our partner organizations look forward to helping your committee address the issues that need to be resolved to establish evidence-based and cost effective utilization of acupuncture services under Medicare, Medicaid, and CHIP programs. I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Matthew D. Bauer', with a stylized flourish at the end.

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