

November 13, 2024

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
568 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
2433 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Steve Scalise
House Majority Leader
2049 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Chair, Committee on Energy and Commerce
2188 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Ranking Member, Committee on Energy and
Commerce
2107 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Brett Guthrie
Chair, Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on
Health
2434 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Anna Eshoo
272 Cannon House Office Building
Ranking Member, Energy and Commerce
Subcommittee on Health
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Johnson, Majority Leader Scalise, Minority Leader Jeffries, Chair McMorris Rodgers, Ranking Member Pallone, Health Subcommittee Chair Guthrie and Health Subcommittee Ranking Member Eshoo:

The undersigned health care provider and patient organizations thank you for the House passage of the SUPPORT Reauthorization bill. While the Senate HELP Committee passed its version of SUPPORT Reauthorization, S.3933, the Senate has not yet taken a full vote on the bill. One significant difference between the House and Senate versions is that the Senate bill includes the **bipartisan Advancing Research for Chronic Pain Act (S.2922/H.R.7164)**.

We are reaching out to you with a timely request of great importance to 51 million Americans living with debilitating chronic pain, as well as those living with substance use disorder. **If the House and Senate agree to preconference the SUPPORT Act for inclusion in an end-of-year package, we urge you to prioritize the bipartisan Advancing Research for Chronic Pain Act that was included in the Senate's marked-up reauthorization bill.**

Pain is the most common reason Americans access the health care system. Chronic musculoskeletal pain is the leading cause of disability nationally and globally. A 2023 National

Institute of Health (NIH) study reported in JAMA Neurology found that new cases of chronic pain in the U.S. are growing at a faster rate than diabetes, depression, and hypertension.¹ The CDC's *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* on April 14, 2023 reported that 20.9% of U.S. adults or 51.6 million Americans experienced chronic pain in 2021, and that 6.9% or 17.1 million experienced high-impact chronic pain that interferes with their ability to function on a daily basis.² High-impact chronic pain devastates a person's quality of life, negatively affecting all aspects of daily functioning — including sleep, work, social activities, and relationships. High-impact chronic pain leads to social isolation and often depression, anxiety, and double the risk of suicide.³ Those living with pain struggle for years to find help, often seeing four, five, or more practitioners in a desperate effort to find treatments that will lessen their relentless pain.

You would expect that for a public health problem of this enormity, CDC would regularly report population health data beyond these top-line numbers. But unlike other major health conditions such as cancer, diabetes, and heart disease, we lack more detailed high-quality data that would allow us to better understand the problem of pain and inform policy interventions to improve care. For instance, we lack data on incidence and prevalence of known pain conditions; demographics such as age, race, gender, and geographic location; risk factors, comorbidities, diagnosis, and progression markers; the effectiveness of various treatment approaches and the utilization of medical and social services, among others. The last time we had any cost data on chronic pain was in 2010. At that time, the direct (health care costs) and indirect (public and private disability, missed work, reduction in productivity) costs of pain were estimated to be between \$560 to \$635 billion annually.⁴

The Advancing Research for Chronic Pain Act would require CDC to report, aggregate, and annually update this data on a public chronic pain information hub or website. **To be clear, the information required by this bill is NOT redundant or duplicative of any work that CDC or any other U.S. Health and Human Services agency is currently doing.** Any population health data on chronic pain that has been reported by a government agency is high-level, piecemeal, erratic, and in most cases has come about due to years of repeated requests from Congress and pain advocates. This is much-needed, basic information that will enable us to better attack a costly and festering public health epidemic that we know is increasing at an alarming rate. This bill is a common-sense, inexpensive — estimated to cost less than \$7M — bi-partisan measure that we see as a crucial step in formulating smart, data-driven solutions to a pervasive, debilitating, and costly public health problem.

We applaud you for your work and leadership on the original SUPPORT Act in 2018 that included critical provisions to improve the care of Americans with substance use disorders as well as Americans living with chronic pain. We hope that you will ensure that the Advancing Research for Chronic Pain Act is included in any final SUPPORT package agreed to by both the House and Senate. We, the 51.6 million Americans living with chronic pain, and the health care

¹ <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2804995>

² <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/72/wr/pdfs/mm7215-H.pdf>

³ <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/16420727/>

⁴ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK92521/>

providers who care for them thank you for your consideration of our request. If you would like further information, please contact Cindy Steinberg, Director of Policy and Advocacy at the U.S. Pain Foundation at cindy@uspainfoundation.org.

Sincerely,

AiArthritis

Alliance for Aging Research

Alliance for Gout Awareness

Alliance for Headache Disorders Advocacy

AMBY HEALTHCARE

American Academy of Pain Medicine

American Association of Kidney Patients (AAKP)

American Association of Pain Psychology

American Association of Payers, Administrators and Networks (AAPAN)

American Chronic Pain Association

American Massage Therapy Association

American Occupational Therapy Association

American Physical Therapy Association

American Podiatric Medical Association

American Society for Pain Management Nursing (ASPMN)

American Society of Acupuncturists

Amherst Cognitive Therapy

Anodunos LLC

Blue Sky Family Counseling and coaching

BSHI, LLC

Chronic Migraine Awareness

Chronic Pain Research Alliance

Coalition for Headache and Migraine Patients (CHAMP)

Danielle Byron Henry Migraine Foundation

Dysautonomia International

Emery & Milne Psychological Group, LLC

Evolvlove Sound Therapy

Fibromyalgia Association

For Grace: Women In Pain

Foundation for Chiropractic Progress

Gerontological Society of America

Gout Support Group of America

HealthyWomen

Hope in Pain, Inc.

Infusion Access Foundation
Institute for Natural Medicine
Integrative Medicine for the Underserved (IM4US)
International Association for the Study of Pain
International Association of Yoga Therapists
Interstitial Cystitis Association
Lupus and Allied Diseases Association, Inc.
Miles for Migraine
National Association of Social Workers
National Headache Foundation
National Pain Advocacy Center
National Vulvodynia Association
NDPHaware.org
Osher Center for Integrative Health
Pain Collaborative to Advance Equitable Value-Based Solutions
Patients Rising
Protecting Access to Pain Relief (PAPR) Coalition
Renal Physicians Association
San Mateo Medical Center Pain Management Clinic
Shatterproof
Sjogren's Foundation
Spina Bifida Association
Spondylitis Association of America
Swedish Medical Group
T1D Exchange, Inc.
The Ehlers-Danlos Society
The Foundation for Peripheral Neuropathy
The Hartford
The Headache and Migraine Policy Forum
The National Pancreas Foundation
Traden Health
U.S. Pain Foundation
United States Association for the Study of Pain
Wellward Medical

CC:

The Honorable Yadira Caraveo
The Honorable Zachary Nunn
The Honorable Michael Lawler
The Honorable Eleanor Holmes Norton

The Honorable Mary Sattler Peltola
The Honorable Terri Sewell