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AB 1826 Exposes Red Tape That Kills Pain Organization Urges Passage of Bill that would Ban Unethical Step Therapy Practices by Insurers

Sacramento, Calif. – The Los Angeles-based pain organization For Grace has teamed with Assemblymember Jared Huffman to urge the passage of Assembly Bill 1826, a bill which would abolish the unethical prescription practices used by insurance companies known as step therapy, also referred to as “fail first.” Step therapy is a policy used by many health plans to help control health care costs and requires pain patients to experiment with various medications and/or treatments before gaining access to the one originally prescribed by their physician.

“As a matter of health policy, Californians can no longer afford to leave issues as critical as patient care in the hands of bureaucrats and health insurance executives,” said Assemblymember Jared Huffman, author of AB 1826. “We must instead place patient care back in the hands of physicians who are in the best position of knowing the medical history and needs of the patients.”

For Grace is sponsoring AB 1826 as an attempt toward prohibiting health care plans or health care insurers from forcing pain patients to experiment with different medications and/or treatments than the one prescribed by their physician, ultimately resulting in lower health care costs for patients. If passed, AB 1826 will enforce changes that would result in lower healthcare costs for Californians, less wasted hours spent by physicians and pain patients would be provided with the best treatment possible for their condition the first time around.

“While Americans are continuing to suffer, insurance companies are using them as guinea pigs, and many are unaware of the practices being used,” said Cynthia Toussaint, Founder and Spokesperson of For Grace, the Bill’s sponsor. “This legislation would put an end to patients being forced to endure weeks, even years, of unnecessary pain,

inappropriate treatments and increased health care costs. Californians must be aware of these issues and speak out to help prevent prolonged suffering, and even death, for those in pain.”

Approximately 76.2 million Americans suffer from pain, which is more than diabetes, heart disease and cancer combined. The annual cost of chronic pain is estimated to be \$100 billion nation-wide, including healthcare expenses, lost income and lost productivity due to suffering. Adults with pain have worse health status and experience more disability in terms of lost workdays, activity limitations, reduced sleep and increased psychological distress than those without pain.

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About For Grace

For Grace is a nonprofit organization passionately devoted to ensuring the ethical and equal treatment of all women in pain. For Grace’s main goal is to increase awareness of the gender disparity women experience worldwide in the assessment and treatment of their pain. For more information please visit www.forgrace.org.