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AB 369 Exposes Red Tape That Hurts Pain Organization Urges Passage of Bill that would Restrict Unethical Step Therapy Practices by Insurers

Los Angeles, Calif. – The Los Angeles-based pain organization For Grace has teamed with Assembly Member Jared Huffman to urge the passage of Assembly Bill 369, a bill that would restrict the unethical prescription practices used by insurance companies known as step therapy, also referred to as “fail first.” Step therapy is a policy utilized by health plans to help control costs that require pain patients to experiment with various medications 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 Assembly Member Jared Huffman, author of AB 369. “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 pain patients.”

For Grace is sponsoring AB 369 in an attempt to restrict health care plans from forcing pain patients to experiment with up to five medications before authorizing the one originally prescribed by their physician, ultimately resulting in higher health care costs and prolonged suffering. If passed, AB 369 will enforce changes that will result in lower healthcare costs for Californians, less wasted hours spent by physicians and timely access to the best treatment for pain patients.

“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 and months of unnecessary pain, inappropriate treatments and increased health care costs. Californians must be aware of this issue and speak out to prevent additional suffering for those in pain.”

Approximately 80 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.