

July 27, 2001

Kimberly Topper
Food & Drug Administration, CDER
Advisors & Consultants Staff, HFD-21
5600 Fishers Lane
Rockville, Maryland 20857

Dear Ms. Topper:

As Regional Director of Arizona for the American Chronic Pain Association (ACPA), a non-profit, self-help, mutual aid organization providing help and hope to those suffering from chronic pain, I over see all our support groups in the state of Arizona. I also, am the leader of the Scottsdale, Arizona, chronic pain support group. My position affords me contact with countless numbers of people suffering from pain 24 hrs. a day. I, myself, am in this category and have suffered incessant pain for 12 years. Not only do I educate my groups in pain management, but I also, give workshops to hospital pain clinic patients on our multi-disciplinary approach to pain management, which entails such skills as relaxation techniques, goal-setting, patients' rights, positive attitudes, exercise, good nutrition, sleep hygiene, setting priorities, communication skills, stress management, and etc. Even with the knowledge of the aforementioned, almost all of us are on a pharmacological program prescribed by our respective physicians for pain management which might include such classes of drugs that affect the pain response as anti-depressants, anti-convulsives, anti-inflammatory agents, and antispasmodics, just to mention a few. However, a good percentage of us also have opioids prescribed as part of our program. We are deeply distressed that the FDA wants to restrict prescription of these particular drugs! Finally, the 106th Congress passed a bill declaring the decade beginning on Jan. 1, 2001, as the Decade for Pain Control and Research, which former President Clinton signed. Hopefully, this will mean that the government will devote funds for this. Attending many pain conferences, I am receiving information that provides hope for the future for people like me, however, in the meantime, opioids are a part of our life. Because of side effects, we take as little as possible of all medications. We just want to function in life! There has been research that claims living in constant pain is detrimental to all organs in our bodies. I know it surely raises blood pressure! As pain medicine has become as specialty in medicine in the last 10 years or so, I now worry that the FDA will place such constraints on pain medications, that doctors will not be able to prescribe these kinds of drugs that lower our pain level. I receive no money for the work I do, but do it to try to improve the lives of chronic pain sufferers. It has been such a struggle to get to this point in time especially with the abuse of opioids by drug addicts. The American Pain Society and the American Academy of Pain Management (both organizations for pain medicine physicians) have sent the ACPA information, which states that most chronic pain sufferers do not become addictive to

opioids. Please do not turn back the clock now! Please keep the thousands of us in Arizona in mind before you make your decision on restricting the prescribing of certain classes of narcotic drugs. I have literally painstakingly, written this letter to you on our behalf. By this, I mean that I cannot sit for more than a 20 minutes at a time as any pressure on my tailbone exacerbates my pain. I have to use a special cushion to sit down, and even with it, my pain is increased! If it were not for opioids, I could not tolerate sitting at all. Think of the tens of thousands like me in our country and don't turn the clock back now on pain medicine!

I thank you for your time and would appreciate an acknowledgment that you did receive this by mail or e-mail to me at: PARickhoff3@yahoo.com

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Penny A. Rickhoff". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "P" and "R".

Penny A. Rickhoff
Regional Director of Arizona
American Chronic Pain Association
11627 N. 114Th Place
Scottsdale, AZ 85259
(480) 314-2330