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Anesthetics and Life Support Drug Advisory Committee  
Advisors and Consultants Staff  
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To whom it may concern:

I have been a practicing pain physician for the last 10 years and have worked with some of the most difficult patients currently dealing with chronic pain. It is important that the committee understand the limitations of the practicing physicians caring for these difficult patients and that opioids play an integral role in the chronic management of pain.

Diversion and recreational use of drugs, as well as other mind-altering medications have been around for centuries and I am certain they will, in no way, be influenced by anything we are able to do as a society. The fact that prohibition failed miserably and cost millions of dollars by the excursion of the government into the cares of the alcoholic beverage industry should be an issue not to be revisited.

The limitation of medications into the medical community, through good intentions, only limits the care that can be provided to patients suffering in chronic states of illnesses, and those who are dying of diseases that cannot be altered. It is my opinion, after practicing in the pain management field for the last 10 years that the patients who need medications deserve them, and those who abuse and divert medications prescribed by physicians will be a continuing, ongoing problem. Each individual practicing medicine should be encouraged to try to decrease the number of drugs that reach unintended sources, but should not be discouraged from practicing good medicine. Guidelines and systems for chronic opioid prescribing should be available for those physicians who are caring for these individuals and mechanisms for education and support should be put in place.

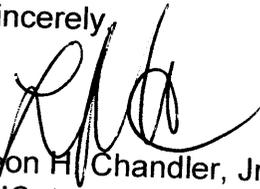
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Page two

It has taken at least two lifetimes, that of my father who was a physician, and my own, to try to get medications to the public that can alleviate pain and suffering. We have made a significant difference in the last 10 to 20 years in this area with opioid prescribing and I hope that the government will not take four steps backwards in its attempt to alleviate the diversion problems that we see in medicine. There are always going to be a few bad pennies, but the deserving patient need not suffer because of the hands of those who are out for their own interests.

Thank you very much for taking time to listen to one who works diligently to try to provide better care for the public. If I can be of any further assistance in being proactive with this problem, I will be more than happy to.

Sincerely,



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