



Steve Paine, OMD, L.Ac.

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February 28, 2016

Senator Crisco, Representative Megna
Senator Kelly, Representative Sampson, and
Members of the Insurance and Real Estate Committee
Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT

RE: SB-98

Thank you very much for your time today.

My name is Steve Paine, and I am an appointed member of the Connecticut Worker's Compensation Medical Advisory Panel, which advises Chairman Mastropietro on standards and protocols for the treatment of injured Connecticut workers. Acupuncture is a valued component of Connecticut's health care system.

I am testifying today in support of SB-98 as the President of the National Guild of Acupuncture & Oriental Medicine and as a Connecticut licensed acupuncturist. We are Guild 62 of the Office and Professional Employees International Union and we are affiliated with the National AFL-CIO and with the Connecticut state AFL-CIO. We serve members in Connecticut and 15 other states and the District of Columbia. Our Guild is dedicated to providing the American public with the highest level of acupuncture and oriental medicine care available anywhere in the world. Our mission is to continue to educate practitioners to a level of competence which allows licensed acupuncturists to fully integrate with mainstream medicine.

For the first time in history, pharmaceutical costs exceed medical costs in the Connecticut worker's compensation system. The same trend applies to the major medical insurance



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system. Viable alternatives to drugs must be used to manage costs. Acupuncture has a long history of reducing pharmaceutical costs through the biochemical actions of acupuncture which enhance the body's internal capacities to reduce inflammation and pain and to accelerate tissue repair. A licensed acupuncturist was appointed to the Medical Advisory Panel to cooperate with medical colleagues in Connecticut to reduce pharmaceutical costs within the workers compensation system. Acupuncture serves that same function within the major medical insurance system and can reduce costs even further when such coverage is mandated.

Over many years, licensed acupuncturists in Connecticut have demonstrated the ability to reduce healthcare costs by helping patients return to work earlier and recover faster from injuries and illnesses. We have compelling evidence that we significantly reduce a family's healthcare costs by dramatically reducing the use of surgery, prescription drugs and doctor visits.

Solid research backs in this contention. Claire M Cassidy, PhD, in "Chinese Medicine Users in United States: Utilization, Satisfaction and Medical Plurality", which is included in our submission, which indicated that 79% of users of Chinese medicine state that the use of acupuncture enabled them to reduce their use of prescription drugs, and 70% said that they were able to avoid surgery which had been recommended for them. With the tremendous opioid epidemic affecting Connecticut, the use of fewer prescription drugs is a tremendous cost saver to the state, reducing both initial costs and in the cost of opioid addiction treatment.

Significant cost savings through the use of acupuncture is clearly demonstrated in the attached meta-analysis from NGAOM Washington State VP, Dr. Jacob Godwin: Evidence-Based Assessment for Inclusion of Acupuncture Therapy in Workers' Compensation Treatment Protocols".

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It makes eminent sense to encourage low-cost, drug-free approaches to reduce the cost of healthcare.

In support of that contention, I have also attached "Resolution 4" from the Connecticut AFL-CIO passed June 14, 2014 endorsing the inclusion of licensed acupuncture in major medical insurance plans, and a letter of endorsement for the NGAOM, from National AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka, extolling the cost-saving virtues of the use of acupuncture and endorsing its use for the 55 million member AFL-CIO family, including members, family members, and retirees.

Sincerely,

Steve Paine

Steve Paine, OMD, (Hong Kong), Licensed Acupuncturist (CT, Hawaii)

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