



November 8, 2018

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Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor, State of New York
Executive Chamber, State Capitol
Albany, New York 12224

Re: S.6666 Amedore/A.2023 Bronson – An Act to amend the workers' compensation law and the education law, in relation to the care and treatment of injured employees by licensed or certified acupuncturists

Dear Governor Cuomo:

Friends of Recovery- New York (FOR-NY) is a state-wide Recovery Community Organization working on behalf of millions of individuals and families in New York to educate decision makers and the general public about recovery from addiction. FOR-NY supports the addition of proactive approaches to combatting addiction and saving lives.

Acupuncture is "an effective, safe, and cost-effective treatment for numerous types of acute and chronic pain" and "should be recommended as a first line treatment for pain before opiates are prescribed".¹ Acupuncture is even used directly by the Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services to reduce drug cravings. Yet access to acupuncture is limited for New York's injured workers as Licensed Acupuncturists are excluded from the list of providers guaranteed reimbursement, which now only includes physicians and chiropractors. This bill addresses this issue by adding Licensed Acupuncturists to the statutory list of eligible Workers' Compensation providers.

In a recent statement, you shared this view by saying "[i]n this battle against the opioid epidemic, it is critical that we use every means at our disposal to prevent the unnecessary prescription of... dangerous and addictive painkillers."² We strongly agree, which is why we urge you to take this opportunity to make acupuncture quickly and fully accessible to New Yorkers who get hurt on the job.

Thank you very much for your consideration and continued efforts on behalf of the many New Yorkers and their families who are coping each day with the scourge of addiction.

Sincerely,


Allison Weingarten, Interim Executive Director

¹Fan, Arthur Yin, et al. "Acupuncture's Role in Solving the Opioid Epidemic: Evidence, Cost-Effectiveness, and Care Availability for Acupuncture as a Primary, Non-Pharmacologic Method for Pain Relief and Management." *Journal of Integrative Medicine*, vol. 15, no. 6, Nov. 2017, pp. 415-416.

²"Governor Cuomo Signs Bill Adding Pain Management to List of Eligible Conditions for Treatment with Medical Marijuana." September 24, 2018. <https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-cuomo-signs-bill-adding-pain-management-list-eligible-conditions-treatment-medical>.