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Dear OIRA,

I sympathize with the position you are in and recognize the challenges America faces when it comes to pain management. I understand the sorrow and devastation caused by addiction, often stemming from corporate greed and a lack of regulation. However, the pendulum has swung too far, and the consequences are devastating.

Your policies now affect chronic pain patients who have done nothing wrong. These are individuals who have never failed a drug test or abused their medications, are being denied the relief they need. We hear of children undergoing surgeries without adequate pain management, cancer patients like my own mother dying in agony because doctors are too afraid to prescribe opioids for fear of addiction, even in terminal cases. My mother spent her final days in unbearable pain, crying out because she was denied medication that could have eased her suffering.

I, too, have suffered. After open abdominal surgery, I was sent home with nothing but gabapentin, a drug that is both dangerous and ineffective for acute surgical pain. The same is happening to countless others. Friends who rely on pain management have been abruptly taken off their medications, and some have tragically chosen death over a life of untreated pain. This is the reality your policies have created.

Your actions have allowed gabapentin and suboxone to emerge as new issues in America's drug crisis. Gabapentin, in particular, is linked to memory loss, and dependency. How will you respond when lawsuits emerge over these effects? Why do you discriminate against patients in pain, including children and cancer patients? Why have you tied doctors' hands, preventing them from using their medical expertise to help their patients?

America's healthcare system is broken, and the current approach to pain management is failing. The tragic actions of a young, promising individual who made a desperate choice due to untreated pain and systemic neglect should serve as a wake-up call. We need rules and regulations, but eliminating opioids entirely is not the answer. Denying them to cancer patients is cruel. Taking medications away from chronic pain patients and driving them to suicide is medical torture.

It is time to fix this. Give doctors the freedom to prescribe medications based on their knowledge and their patients' needs. Ensure that those who require pain management have access to the care they deserve. Stop allowing pharmaceutical companies to dictate who gets treatment. Address the real needs of individuals with broken bodies who depend on compassionate, effective care.

No one should die in agony because their doctor fears the DEA. My mother's cries, as she lay dying with a hole in her bone visible from across the room, will haunt me forever. Shame on this movement and the harm it has caused. We demand change not for profit, but for humanity.

Sincerely,
A Heartbroken Advocate