

From: Allen, Susan [Susan.Allen@vermont.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, February 09, 2016 1:51 PM
To: Robert.Shapiro@uvmhealth.org
Subject: Final letter, per your request
Attachments: GPS letter to Senate HELP committee 2-8-16.docx

From: Mishaan, Jessica
Sent: Monday, February 08, 2016 8:32 AM
To: Allen, Susan <Susan.Allen@vermont.gov>
Subject: FW: Senate Judiciary hearing

[My draft attached for your review.](#) Please also see Lisa's note below.

From: Kunin, Lisa
Sent: Monday, February 08, 2016 8:09 AM
To: Mishaan, Jessica <Jessica.Mishaan@vermont.gov>
Subject: Fwd: Senate Judiciary hearing

Jess,

Thank you so much. This is what Sue sent me. It needs to go to the Chair and Vice Chair of the US Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee today.

The email asks for us to provide a scanned copy to Robert Shapiro to be circulated tomorrow to an advocacy group heading to Capitol Hill tomorrow.

Please format and review the letter. I looked at it, but I'm feeling pretty foggy, so I would appreciate you giving it a real proof.

Sue should do a final review of language and confirm that we should share with Shapiro /group. (Please ask her if Darren should see too). Once she gives final approval, please email scanned copy to Shapiro.

Since advocacy group will be taking the letter to DC tomorrow, I think we should also email scanned copy to Senators Alexander and Murray. I would email it to their Chief of Staffs or Legislative Directors. I don't know who the staffers are, but you should be able to find online.

I can't thank you enough for your help.

Lisa

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Susan Allen-Picone <suepic33@hotmail.com>
Date: February 5, 2016 at 2:26:23 PM EST
To: "lisa.kunin@vermont.gov" <lisa.kunin@vermont.gov>
Subject: FW: Senate Judiciary hearing

Will you help me with this on Monday?

From: GPS [GPS@vermont.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, February 3, 2016 9:05 PM
To: Susan Allen-Picone
Subject: Fwd: Senate Judiciary hearing

A hard copy will go in the mail.

Let me know if you need more!

Sue

PETER SHUMLIN
Governor



State of Vermont
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

February 8, 2016

The Honorable Lamar Alexander, Chairman
The Honorable Patty Murray, Ranking Member
Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions
United States Senate

Dear Chairman Alexander and Ranking Member Murray,

I am aware that you, and your colleagues of the Senate H.E.L.P Committee, are actively drafting the Senate companion bill to the 21st Century Cures Act (H.R. 6) for reform of the NIH and the FDA.

I am writing to you at this time to strongly urge you to include provisions within this bill that ensure sufficient NIH funding for fundamental, translational, and clinical research on chronic pain.

Pain is the single most costly medical problem facing our country.

The National Academy of Medicine (NAM) has estimated that 100 million Americans experience chronic pain each year, at a total annual societal cost that may reach \$635 billion, not including \$55 billion lost to opioid misuse and addiction. Yet compared to other major diseases, pain research has been significantly underfunded relative to its societal costs.

	US total costs (billions) (2011 NAM estimates)	NIH Research Funding (billions) (2014 NIH estimates)	Research funding / economic costs (relative to "Pain")
Pain	\$560 to \$635	\$0.499	1
Heart Disease	\$309	\$1.224	>4.4 times higher
Diabetes	\$188	\$1.011	>6 times higher
Cancer	\$243	\$5.392	>25 times higher

NIH has not announced any plans to increase their funding of pain research. Though they recently indicated that in the future they intend to pay greater attention to disease burden measures in prioritizing their research portfolio, it is not at all certain how this new policy might impact pain research. Consequently, I urge you to include provisions for markedly increased pain research funding in the NIH/FDA reform bill that you are currently negotiating.

Moreover, there is another crucial reason to increase pain research at this time: the need to find effective, affordable, and *non-addictive* alternatives to current opioid analgesics.

The nation's current opioid and heroin crisis can be traced back to the mid-1990s, when the FDA approved OxyContin for chronic pain, despite a lack of evidence for its long-term safety and efficacy. As we all now

know, the consequences have been disastrous. As long as opioid medications remain the default mainstay therapies for chronic pain, these drugs will constitute an ever-present risk for diversion and addiction.

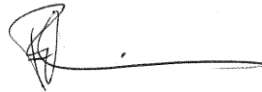
We need to address the prescription opioid crisis at its source: opioid medications, as we know them, must be made obsolete. This will require a significant but necessary NIH investment. The benefits of discovery of better chronic pain therapies will far out-weigh these research costs in terms of reduced suffering and shattered lives, increased workplace productivity, innovative product development, and overall societal cost-savings.

Multiple bills are currently under consideration in this Congress to address the prescription opioid and heroin crisis. But no congressional bill is addressing the concurrent crisis of mistreatment of chronic pain - which lies at the origin of the addiction crisis, and will remain so until better and safer pain medications are discovered.

The NIH/FDA reform bill that you are currently drafting is the logical legislative vehicle to provide NIH with necessary directives on this issue. I urge you to seize this important opportunity.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Shumlin', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Peter Shumlin
Governor