

CO-SPONSORSHIP MEMORANDUM

TO: All Legislators
FROM: Representative John Nygren

RE: Senator Kathy Bernier
LRB-3740 and LRB-4817: Physical health services and acupuncture
under Medical Assistance program

and making an appropriation.

DEADLINE: November 12th, 2019

In the budget, Republicans included \$500,000 GPR and \$730,000 FED in each year of the biennium for physical health service provider reimbursement. The funding was placed in the Joint Committee on Finance supplemental account with the intention of having the Department of Health Services meet with various physical health providers like Physical Therapists and Chiropractors to determine how best to utilize the funding. The increased funding was intended to improve access to alternative methods of pain relief without the prescription of addictive opioids.

Unfortunately, this provision was vetoed in its entirety, further delaying necessary treatment for Wisconsinites. In his veto message, Governor Evers noted that he vetoed this because the state chose not to expand welfare. With an issue as important as this, we should be doing all that we can to help those in pain get relief without the use of opioids.

This bill accomplishes what was passed by Republicans in the state budget and places \$500,000 GPR each year of the biennium in the Joint Committee on Finance supplemental account. Upon passage, we hope DHS will meet with providers and stakeholders to address the best strategy to increase reimbursement rates.

Additionally, this bill includes acupuncture provided by a certified acupuncturist as a reimbursable benefit under the Medicaid Assistance program.

Nonpharmacologic treatments, including acupuncture, are underutilized in the treatment of chronic pain. By increasing the availability of safe, effective nonpharmacologic treatments for chronic pain, patient exposure to opioids can be reduced.

A substantial body of evidence demonstrates that acupuncture is effective for chronic pain. The World Health Organization, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Institutes of Health, and the Institutes of Medicine recognize the effectiveness of acupuncture based on data from controlled clinical trials and systematic reviews of the evidence for the management of numerous types of pain.

The Department of Health Services, in an April 2018 Report on Physical Medicine Alternatives to Pharmacological Treatment of Low Back Pain, included a recommendation that acupuncture

be added as a covered benefit in the Medicaid program to allow the program to develop and implement appropriate parameters to cover medically necessary acupuncture for chronic pain.

If you would like to co-sponsor this legislation, please contact [Chris](#) in Rep. Nygren's office or Denise in Senator Bernier's office.