

American Society of Interventional Pain Physicians®
Society of Interventional Pain Management Surgery Centers Inc.

"The Voice of Interventional Pain Management"

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Health and Welfare Committee
Louisiana House of Representatives
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Baton Rouge, LA 70804
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Re: Opposition to House Bill 941 by American Society of Interventional Pain Physicians (ASIPP)
with component societies including Louisiana Society of Interventional Pain Physicians

Dear Representative Illg, Chairman Bagley, & Members of the Health and Welfare Committee:

We appreciate the opportunity to express our major concerns on this issue and hope you will consider our concerns in the final consideration of the bill.

We have recently written on behalf of American Society of Interventional Pain Physicians (ASIPP) and Louisiana Society of Interventional Pain Physicians indicating our opposition. Once again, we reiterate our staunch opposition to the above bill. To understand our opposition, it is important to understand the role of American Society of Interventional Pain Physicians and component state societies, interventional pain management specialty training, and the definition of interventional pain management techniques.

ASIPP is a not-for-profit professional organization founded in 1998 now comprising over 4,500 interventional pain physicians and other practitioners who are dedicated to ensuring safe, appropriate and equal access to essential pain management services for patients across the country suffering with chronic and acute pain. There are approximately 8,500 appropriately trained and qualified physicians practicing interventional pain management in the United States. ASIPP is comprised of 49 state societies of Interventional Pain Physicians, including Puerto Rico and the affiliated Texas Pain Society.

Interventional pain management is defined as the discipline of medicine devoted to the diagnosis and treatment of pain related disorders principally with the application of interventional techniques in managing sub acute, chronic, persistent, and intractable pain, independently or in conjunction with other modalities of treatment (The National Uniform Claims Committee. Specialty Designation for Interventional Pain Management- 09 <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/transmittals/Downloads/r1779b3.pdf>).

Interventional pain management techniques are minimally invasive procedures including, percutaneous precision needle placement, with placement of drugs in targeted areas or ablation of targeted nerves; and

some surgical techniques such as laser or endoscopic discectomy, intrathecal infusion pumps and spinal cord stimulators, for the diagnosis and management of chronic, persistent or intractable pain (Medicare Payment Advisory Commission. Report to the Congress: Paying for interventional pain services in ambulatory settings. Washington, DC: MedPAC. December 2001 <http://medpac.gov/docs/default-source/reports/december-2001-report-to-the-congress-paying-for-interventional-pain-services-in-ambulatory-settings.pdf?sfvrsn=0>).

SIPMS is a not-for-profit professional organization founded in 2005, with membership involving surgical centers focusing on interventional pain management, dedicated to ensuring safe, appropriate, and equal access to essential pain management services for patients across the country suffering with chronic pain. There are approximately 500 surgery centers across the nation approved by Medicare providing or solely or an overwhelming majority of interventional pain management services.

As you see, all the interventional pain physicians with appropriate training can perform these spine procedures. In fact, American Board of Interventional Pain Physicians established by American Society of Interventional Pain Physicians does conduct board examinations with didactics and hands-on workshop on cadavers with inclusion of spinal interventional techniques. In addition, American Society of Interventional Pain Physicians provides extensive training in multiple spinal interventional techniques including the procedures included in the above bill.

Further, as you see, the definition of interventional techniques itself, as developed by MedPAC, includes minimally invasive procedures including endoscopic surgery techniques. As you are aware, minimally invasive procedures are performed with small incision with minimal tissue exposure utilizing image guidance and an overwhelming majority of them are performed in an outpatient setting. Once again, we would like to emphasize that all the physicians who are performing these procedures are very well trained and credentialed through hospitals, ambulatory surgery centers, and the insurers.

Less invasive spine procedures can reduce costs and provide multitude of options for those who may not be a candidate for open surgical procedures. A passage of this bill will be a disservice to the population of Louisiana as they will be seeking care elsewhere outside the state. This bill will deprive of high quality and high value medical care.

Consequently, on behalf of the Louisiana Society of Interventional Pain Physicians, component societies of ASIPP, and the Society of Interventional Pain Management Surgery Centers (SIPMS), we oppose the above bill as it to restrict access to minimally invasive spine procedures that are done by appropriately trained interventional pain management physicians. We feel that it is within the best interests of our patients to preserve our ability to continue to offer new, minimally invasive technologies to the citizens of Louisiana.

Thank you for providing us an opportunity to express our concern once again. Please circulate these comments among all concerned.

If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact one of us.

Laxmaiah Manchikanti, MD

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