



For Immediate Release

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ASSEMBLY MEMBER JARED HUFFMAN, OVER 300 NEUROPATHY PATIENTS, DOCTORS AND MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS GATHER IN SACRAMENTO TO RAISE AWARENESS OF NEUROPATHIC PAIN AND IMPROVE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR CHRONIC PAIN PATIENTS

Assembly Member Jared Huffman Honored with “Legislator of the Year” Award for Advocacy on Behalf of Californians Living in Pain at 6th Annual Neuropathy Action Awareness Day

SACRAMENTO (June 20, 2012) – The Neuropathy Action Foundation (NAF), a non-profit advocacy organization that provides neuropathy patients with medical resources necessary to improve their quality of life, today hosted its sixth annual “Neuropathy Action Awareness Day” in Sacramento. The event brought together hundreds of patients, providers, policymakers and caregivers from across the country to access the latest medical news on neuropathy from experts in the field.

The Neuropathy Action Foundation presented Assembly Member Jared Huffman (D-San Rafael) with its “Legislator of the Year” award in recognition of his continued advocacy on behalf of Californians living with neuropathy and other chronic pain. Assembly Member Huffman introduced Assembly Bill 369, which would curb unnecessary and dangerous health insurer delay tactics that deny California patients access to the critical pain treatments that their doctors think will be most effective.

“Unnecessary delays in treatment for chronic pain patients are unconscionable and intolerable, particularly when driven by profit and greed. AB 369 will bring California one step closer to changing practices that have resulted in higher long-term health care costs and the unnecessary physical and emotional suffering that pain patients endure,” said Assembly Member Huffman. “California can no longer afford to leave issues as critical as patient care in the hands of bureaucrats and health insurance executives. We must instead place patient care back in the hands of physicians, who are in the best position to know medical history, patient needs and the universe of treatment options.”

AB 369 is currently in the **Senate Health Committee** and will be **heard by the Committee on Wednesday, June 27th**.

In addition to the presentation of the Legislator of the Year Award, highlights of the 6th annual Neuropathy Action Awareness Day included:

- **Jerry Mathers**, the American television, film and stage actor best known for his role on the classic television series *Leave it to Beaver*, shared tips about how to live with diabetic neuropathy;
- **Dr. Mazen Dimachkie**, Professor, University of Kansas Medical Center, presented on how neuropathy patients can most effectively partner with their doctors to treat pain;
- **Leslie Botos**, Vice President of Public Affairs for BloodSource, presented on critical blood and plasma shortages;
- **Dr. Eric Hassid**, CEO and Medical Director of the Institute for Restorative Health, presented on natural options for treating neuropathy;
- **Dr. Todd Levine** (Clinical Professor, University of Arizona) and **Dr. Jeffrey Ralph** (Associate Clinical Professor, University of California San Francisco) convened an “Ask the Experts” panel, where patients could have their neuropathy questions answered by three renowned experts.

The U.S. Institute of Medicine recently released a [report on the impact of chronic pain in America](#) which found that 116 million Americans suffer from chronic pain and estimated that the annual cost of chronic pain nationwide was \$635 billion, including health care expenses, lost income and lost productivity due to suffering.

“As the nation begins to retrain its collective focus on the magnitude of chronic pain and the most effective ways to treat pain, it is critical that the estimated 20 million neuropathy sufferers nationwide have forums like Neuropathy Action Awareness Day where patients can gather, share information, empower themselves to be the best advocates on behalf of their own health,” said NAF President Dominick Spatafora.

Neuropathy is a condition that results when nerves that connect to the brain and spinal cord from the rest of the body are damaged or diseased. There are more than 100 kinds of peripheral nerve disorders. They can affect one nerve or many nerves. This includes injury of nerves to muscles (motor nerves), nerves from the skin (sensory nerves), and/or nerves to the gut and other internal organs (autonomic nerves).

About the Neuropathy Action Foundation

The Neuropathy Action Foundation (NAF), a 501(c)(3) non-profit, is dedicated to ensuring neuropathy patients obtain the necessary resources, information and tools to access individualized treatment to improve their quality of life. The NAF increases awareness among physicians, the general public and public policy officials that neuropathy can potentially be a serious, widespread and disabling condition, which may be treatable when appropriate medical care is provided. www.neuropathyaction.org

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