

Julia Moore, Executive Director of Rhode Island and Northern New England
Arthritis Foundation
Bill # S3022

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony today. My name is Julia Moore, and I serve as the Executive Director of Rhode Island and Northern New England with the Arthritis Foundation, where we advocate for the 1 in 4 adults and children living with arthritis in the United States. There are nearly 60 million people throughout this country who are managing arthritis pain every day. Our community includes many patients who navigate daily challenges managing persistent pain while trying to maintain their quality of life. Ensuring they have access to safe, effective, and appropriate treatment options is central to our mission.

Right now, many patients face significant barriers when trying to access non-opioid pain treatments. These barriers often come in the form of prior authorization requirements, step therapy protocols, delays in approval, and outright denials.

We consistently hear from patients who are prescribed therapies like physical therapy, topical treatments, or other non-opioid options—but cannot access them in a timely way due to insurance hurdles.

At the same time, there are troubling instances where opioid medications—despite their risks—are easier to access than safer alternatives. This creates a system that unintentionally steers patients toward treatments that may not be the best first option.

One common theme we hear is frustration: patients want to follow their provider's recommendation for a comprehensive, non-opioid care plan, but administrative barriers force them to wait, switch therapies, or give up altogether.

S3022 takes an important step toward fixing this imbalance. It supports access to a full spectrum of pain care, including both non-opioid medications and non-drug therapies such as physical therapy and other integrative approaches.

Critically, the bill promotes fairness in utilization management. Non-opioid treatments should not be subject to more restrictive requirements than opioid medications. Patients and providers should be able to choose the safest and most appropriate care without unnecessary obstacles.

Section 5 is especially important. By addressing Medicaid coverage, this bill helps ensure that low-income patients—who already face significant health disparities—have equitable access to comprehensive pain management options. Expanding access in Medicaid is

essential to advancing health equity and improving outcomes for some of the most vulnerable populations.

We strongly urge you to support and pass S3022. This legislation moves us closer to a patient-centered approach to pain management—one that prioritizes safety, access, and choice.

Patients living with arthritis and chronic pain deserve balanced treatment options that reflect their individual needs—not a system that limits them. Thank you for your time and your commitment to improving care for those we represent.