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I am a chronic pain patient of 20 years. I have several spinal and nerve problems (spondylolisthesis, disc height loss, disc tearing, spinal canal stenosis, bilateral sciatica, neuropathy, Reynaud's, hEDS and more) My pain is such that I cannot leave the house most days, or even my bed several days out of the week. I have been badly affected by the CDC and DEA placing themselves between my doctor and I.

Because of your cruel opioid policies, I cannot find a doctor that will actually treat my pain. Instead, I have to submit to the same painful procedures that do not work over and over again and causes me unnecessary suffering. More needles in my spine. More steroids that make my legs feel like they are on fire. More nerve ablation that doesn't work. I am given the lowest dose of the weakest opioid and fobbed off until the next appointment. The only thing it does for me is allow me to sit up for a little while longer. When I ask for an increase or to try a new medication, I am categorically denied, despite the fact that they know I am suffering. Instead, they tell me to try meditation for my severe pain that leaves me in tears.

Because of your opioid policy, I cannot work. My pain is so severe I am housebound, and no employer would hire someone in the state I am in. I cannot do housework because I cannot bend or lift. I cannot cook for my husband after a long day because I can't stand for long enough. I can't even sleep a full night because of the pain.

Pain patients are not the reason for the drug overdoses. Prescriptions have been halved again and again since 2016, and OD deaths are only climbing. It is quite obvious that the deaths are coming from another source. With every halving of available medication, you drive more people to the street. With every reduction, you drive more to suicide or to OD themselves on illicit fentanyl while you blame us for every death. We are not addicts. We want our lives back.

You are not my doctor. Please allow my medical professionals to treat me as they see fit, and stop standing in the way. Stop threatening them for using first-line treatment correctly, for having the compassion to treat someone in pain.

There are vast amounts of illicit fentanyl coming in through legal ports of entry every day. Focus on that instead of denying cancer patients and people coming out of surgery pain control.