

May 23, 2019

To the Medical Board of California,

I am a fifty four year old chronic pain patient. I have chronic daily migraine, fibromyalgia, and depression, among other things.

I was diagnosed with chronic migraines and depression over twenty years ago. During that time my dose of opiates went up, as it is wont to do when your tolerance goes up. I was first on one Vicodin as needed (after trying the non-opiate pain relievers) by the time I moved to Humboldt County I was on five hundred mg of Kadian, a time released morphine.

I by some lucky chance got to be a patient of Dr. Basch's. First she tested me to see if other things were wrong, adjusted medications and supplements. Made sure I could sleep. And had me start coming to pain groups that were held twice a month. In the pain groups, which I have been in for almost five years, we learned every possible way we could help ourselves relieve or deal with pain. After the first year the groups dropped to once a month.

Somewhere in the first year Dr. Basch asked me if I wanted to reduce the amount of Kadian I was on. I said yes, because I wondered if some of the lethargy and brain fog problems I had were related to the amount. Between then and now I have gone down from 500 mg daily to twenty. I take ten milligrams of Kadian in the morning, and again at night. I did this at my own pace, only suggestions to think about going down farther from Dr. Basch. As someone who was addicted to cigarettes, and comes from a family of drug addicts, mostly recovering I know this is the only way this would work. Addicts and pain patients both are wary of someone trying to take away their drugs because we are both dependent on them. I trusted Dr. Basch to help me rather than make some arbitrary decision based on numbers from some agency that doesn't deal with pain control or drug addiction recovery.

This county has inadequate numbers of doctors and dentists for its population. We were amazingly lucky to get onto Dr. Basch's patient list. She's rarely in a position to take new patients. She is a pain specialist in a rural county, which is unheard of. And she not only takes care of our usual medical needs but gives us access to ways to help heal ourselves. Our pain groups consist of meditation and talks about various methods of managing or relieving pain. I think all of those still in the group have improved, and a lot of us are on much less pain medication.

I have no idea why someone would think Dr. Basch was not an adequate doctor. She is a great doctor, possibly to her own detriment. She cares about her patients; she does everything possible to treat us; we all see her once a month at least in the pain groups. She's incredibly knowledgeable about pain and pain relief. She's the best doctor I've ever had. Most doctors I've had let me do a lot of the research on my condition and did what I suggested. Doctor Basch knows a lot more than I do about my conditions and it's such a relief! She seems to keep her knowledge up to date too. In her talks in the pain groups she uses peer reviewed scientific research. I've never had her recommend some treatment without telling me something about the research done on it. Which makes me trust her all the more.

In Humboldt County it is almost impossible to find a doctor. If we were given sixteen days to find new doctors, most of us would have to go outside the county, which in most cases would be the Bay Area, since all rural counties have this problem. Not all of us can make that trip regularly, either financially or physically. And we'd never find one half so good.

Sincerely,

