

April 12, 2016

U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
428 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Implementation Plan for the National Pain Strategy

Dear Chairman Alexander, Ranking Member Murray, and Committee Members:

On behalf of the nearly 70 undersigned organizations, we thank the Committee for its longstanding leadership in addressing the substantial public health crises of chronic pain and opioid abuse, and seek the Committee's continued support in ensuring that the newly released National Pain Strategy (NPS) is implemented in a timely and coordinated fashion. Developed by six federal agencies, along with 80 experts from the medical, scientific, patient and advocacy communities, the NPS is the federal government's first coordinated interagency plan and roadmap to achieving a system of effective, safe, high-quality, evidence-based pain care in America. This improved system of care is critical to reducing the burden of chronic pain, as well as ameliorating the nation's opioid abuse, overdose and addiction crisis.

Studies from the Institute of Medicine (IOM) and Department of Veterans Affairs reveal that 4 in 10 American adults and 80 percent of veterans returning from Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom suffer from chronic pain, at a cost of more than \$600 billion annually (Institute of Medicine, 2011; Lew HL, et al., Journal of Rehabilitation Research & Development, 2009). Despite this significant toll, plus the fact that pain remains the number one reason that people seek care from a health care provider, our nation continues to: invest meagerly in chronic pain research (only 4 cents per patient in 2015); poorly train and educate our health care providers on the proper assessment and management of pain; and provide minimal to no reimbursement for multidisciplinary non-pharmacologic pain management strategies – a key recommendation called for in the new CDC Guideline for Prescribing Opioids for Chronic Pain.

Implementing the objectives of the National Pain Strategy *will* change this! The NPS provides a clear and actionable roadmap that will generate critical population research and health services data; advance prevention and pain care strategies; address disparities in pain assessment and treatment; improve pain service delivery and reimbursement; improve health care provider education and training; and foster public education and communication strategies. Further, the NPS clearly delineates short-, medium-, and long-term deliverables, identifies key federal and non-federal stakeholders, and recommends strategies to measure impact.

Millions of Americans – many of whom have bravely and honorably served their country – are counting on Congress to see the National Pain Strategy through to completion. We can't afford to stop now. We urge the Committee to help transform the NPS from words on a page to meaningful change in the lives of Americans by **requesting a written implementation plan and corresponding budget from the Department of Health and Human Services, to be submitted within 60 days of the Committee's request.**

A PDF of the National Pain Strategy can be viewed online at the following web address:

http://iprcc.nih.gov/docs/HHSNational_Pain_Strategy.pdf.

For additional information or to discuss this request further, please contact the co-facilitators of the Consumer Pain Advocacy Task Force by email (info@ConsumerPainAdvocacy.org) or by phone: Amy Goldstein (913-484-2120) or Christin Veasley (401-316-2089).

With sincere appreciation,

Academic Collaborative for Integrative Health
Academic Consortium for Integrative Medicine & Health
Aimed Alliance
Alliance for Patient Access
American Academy of Hospice and Palliative Medicine
American Academy of Medical Acupuncture
American Academy of Pain Management
American Academy of Pain Medicine
American Academy of Physician Assistants
American Association of Nurse Anesthetists
American Association of Nurse Practitioners
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network*
American Chiropractic Association
American Chronic Pain Association*
American Pain Society
American Pharmacists Association
American Physical Therapy Association
American Psychological Association Practice Organization
American Society for Pain Management Nursing
Arthritis Foundation
Cancer Support Community
Center for Lawful Access and Abuse Deterrence
Center for Practical Bioethics
Center to Advance Palliative Care
Chronic Pain Research Alliance*
Ehlers-Danlos National Foundation
Families for Intractable Pain Relief
Fight for Pain Care Action Network
For Grace
Global Healthy Living Foundation*
Health Care Foundation of Greater Kansas City
Hospice and Palliative Nurses Association
Integrative Health Policy Consortium
International Pain Foundation*

Interstitial Cystitis Association*
Massachusetts Pain Initiative
Motion Picture & Television Fund
National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists
National Center for Homeopathy
National Coalition of Chronic Pain Providers and Professionals
National Comprehensive Cancer Network
National Fibromyalgia & Chronic Pain Association*
National Multiple Sclerosis Society
National Palliative Care Research Center
National Patient Advocate Foundation*
Neuropathy Action Foundation
Oncology Nursing Society
Pain Connection*
Pain Action Alliance to Implement a National Strategy (PAINS)*
Partnership for Palliative Care and the Supportive Care Matters
Pediatric Palliative Care Coalition
Project Lazarus
Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy Syndrome Association*
Samueli Institute
Social Work Hospice and Palliative Care Network
Society for Women's Health Research
State Pain Policy Advocacy Network*
Supportive Care Coalition
The Foundation for Peripheral Neuropathy*
The Gerontological Society of America
The National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine
The Pain Community*
The TMJ Association*
Tufts Program on Pain Research, Education and Policy
United Kentucky Pain Care Action Network
US Pain Foundation*
Wings for Warriors

**Members of the Consumer Pain Advocacy Task Force (CPATF) – a coalition of 16 consumer organizations working to improve the health, well-being and treatment of those living with life-altering pain. The CPATF is united with one goal – to work collectively to promote, support and monitor the implementation of the National Pain Strategy.*