

Summary of HR 2994

Capps/Rogers National Pain Care Policy Act of 2007

Pain is the most common reason Americans access the health care system and is a leading contributor to health care costs. Pain is also a leading cause of disability. Most painful conditions can be relieved with proper treatment, and providing adequate pain management is a crucial component of improving and maintaining quality of life for patients, survivors, and their loved ones. Yet people in pain often face significant barriers that can prevent proper assessment, diagnosis, treatment and management of their pain. The National Pain Care Policy Act of 2007 is designed to address many of these barriers by improving pain care research, education, training, access, outreach and care.

INSTITUTE OF MEDICINE CONFERENCE ON PAIN CARE

Section 3 authorizes an Institute of Medicine Conference on Pain Care to:

- Increase awareness of pain as a significant public health problem;
- Evaluate the adequacy of pain assessment, treatment and management;
- Identify barriers to appropriate pain care;
- Establish an action agenda to address barriers and improve pain care research, education, training and clinical care;
- Highlight disparities in pain care specific to populations that are disproportionately under-treated for pain; and
- Report to Congress on findings and recommendations.

PERMANENT AUTHORIZATION FOR THE PAIN CONSORTIUM AT NIH

Section 4 provides a statutory base for the trans-institute Pain Consortium at the National Institutes of Health to:

- Establish and maintain a coordinated national agenda for basic and clinical research on pain causes and effective treatments;
- Promote integrated pain research, training and related activities across NIH institutes, centers and programs;
- Convene an annual conference to assess and make recommendations for NIH pain research and program activities; and
- Establish a multidisciplinary Consortium Advisory Committee.

PAIN CARE EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Section 5 creates a grant program to improve health professionals' understanding and ability to assess and appropriately treat pain:

- Requires the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) to collect and disseminate protocols and evidence-based practices regarding pain; and
- Authorizes the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) to provide grants for development and implementation of programs to educate and train professionals in pain assessment and care.

PAIN MANAGEMENT PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

Section 6 requires the Secretary of Health and Human Services to develop and implement a national outreach and awareness campaign to educate consumers, patients, families and other caregivers on the:

- Significance of pain as a national public health problem;
- Risks to patients if pain is not properly assessed and treated;
- Availability, benefits, and risks of treatment and management options;
- Importance of having pain assessed and treated;
- Role of pain management specialists;
- Resources available to patients and other consumers to help in dealing with pain; and
- Prevalence and causes of disparities in pain management among underserved populations.

In designing the program, the bill emphasizes the need to reach underserved populations and to provide resources that will reduce disparities in access to appropriate pain treatment.