

EDUCATION ON BEST PRACTICES IN PAIN MANAGEMENT

POSITION:

The American Pain Society (APS) supports increased funding for improving the viability of effective clinical pain management services through enhanced educational initiatives.

APS is a multidisciplinary organization of basic and clinical scientists, practicing clinicians, policy analysts and others who research and treat pain and advocate for patients with pain. Its mission is to advance pain-related research, education, treatment and professional practice.

JUSTIFICATION:

Despite great scientific strides in the past decade, we are far from accomplishing a satisfactory impact on this enormous world-wide health problem. Too many people suffer daily, severe pain. Much more needs to be done to meet these challenges and to increase public awareness of them.

Millions suffer from acute or chronic pain every year and the effects of pain exact a tremendous cost on our country in health care costs, rehabilitation and lost worker productivity as well as the emotional and financial burden it places on patients and their families. Pain is associated with a wide range of injury and disease, and is sometimes the disease itself. Currently only a relatively small subset of treatments is easily accessible and appropriately reimbursed. While this subset may be wholly appropriate for some cases, clinical pain services need to be able to offer broader resources in order to address the needs of patients in pain as a population.

Specifically, greater access to and augmented reimbursement for multidisciplinary pain care is needed. Such approaches include (but are not limited to): psychological and behavioral approaches targeting pain and function, physical and occupational rehabilitation, interventional approaches, traditional medical approaches, and long term care coordination.

Organizations that sponsor and conduct research providing evidence-based information on health care outcomes, quality, cost, and access, such as the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), could answer this need with the appropriate support thereby providing for more informed decisions and improving the quality of health care services.

REQUEST:

To answer this unaddressed priority, APS requests that your office:

- 1) support report language in the FY 2008 L/HHS Appropriations bill requiring AHRQ to collect and disseminate protocols and evidence-based practices regarding pain care to clinicians and the general public; and
- 2) cosponsor the National Pain Care Policy Act of 2007 which includes provisions to establish educational and training programs for health care professionals in pain care.