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AAPMedicine Applauds the Inclusion of Pain Care in the New Healthcare Reform

A position statement from the American Academy of Pain Medicine

The American Academy of Pain Medicine (AAPMedicine) commends the inclusion of key components from the **2009 National Pain Care Policy Act** (Section 4305) as part of the historic healthcare reform bill, **Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act**, signed by President Barack Obama on March 23, 2010.

Recognizing the diversity of opinion that exists regarding the healthcare reform legislation, the **American Academy of Pain Medicine** believes that certain components should be recognized and applauded by all Americans. Everyone knows someone whose life has been changed in profound ways by pain that has not been effectively controlled. This new pain care legislation addresses what the National Institutes of Health calls one of the nation's most important health problems—pain.

Assessment and Awareness

The new provision calls for the **Institute of Medicine Conference on Pain Care**, which includes the mandate to increase awareness of pain as a significant public health problem and identify barriers to appropriate pain care. The conference would establish an action agenda to reduce the barriers and improve research, education, training and clinical care.

Research & Collaboration

NIH funding for pain medicine research is disproportionate with the widespread incidence of chronic pain in our society. The Academy is pleased that the new legislation includes the **Pain Consortium at National Institutes of Health**. This provision encourages the NIH to expand an aggressive program of pain research, calling for collaboration between experts from government, professional and patient groups.

Education and Training

The final component is the **Program for Education and Training in Pain Care** which will authorize training grants, with an emphasis on training on comprehensive, interdisciplinary approaches to pain care, including attention to access and regulatory issues as well as clinical components.

AAPMedicine has worked for many years to advance the legislation that became the pain care provisions in this healthcare reform bill. The collaboration between the Academy's Committee for Legislative Affairs, the Pain Care Coalition (PCC), the American Pain Foundation (APF) and other organizations played an important role in this process. Other legislative accomplishments of this coalition (AAPMedicine, PCC, and APF) were the passage of two bills, the 2009 National Defense Authorization Act and the Veterans Pain Care Act of 2008.

The American Academy of Pain Medicine applauds the efforts to address the public health crisis of pain. It is our hope that these new provisions will lead to better pain care for the patient suffering with chronic or acute pain.

The Academy remains supportive of other efforts to insure access to affordable health care including important reform to the Medicare's sustainable growth rate (SGR) formula.

AAPMedicine, founded in 1983, is the recognized authority on the evaluation and care of patients with pain. It is a professional community of physicians and their treatment teams with a sustained interest in pain disorders, with a background in related specialties such as anesthesiology, internal medicine, neurology, neurosurgery, orthopedic surgery, physiatry, family practice, and psychiatry."

Approved by the AAPM Executive Committee on March 25, 2010

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