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The American Academy of Pain Medicine Applauds IOM Findings Calling for Major Changes in Pain Research, Care, Education and Treatment

June 29, 2011, Glenview, IL— For the one of every four American adults who suffers from chronic pain, the findings released today by the Institute of Medicine in its report, “Relieving Pain in America: A Blueprint for Transforming Prevention, Care, Education and Research” will evoke a sigh of relief. More people suffer with pain than the number afflicted by cancer, diabetes and heart disease combined, the IOM committee noted.

The 2010 Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act required the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to enlist the IOM in examining pain as a public health problem. The results of their efforts was a 300-plus page report that calls for major changes in pain prevention, intervention, assessment and treatment.

“The American Academy of Pain Medicine has been advocating for better pain care for many years,” said Perry G. Fine, MD, President of the American Academy of Pain Medicine. “While we are still evaluating the complete report, we thank the Congress for commissioning the highly respected IOM to study this problem and develop recommendations on how to improve pain research, care and education. And we thank the IOM, and in particular the distinguished panel of experts on this Committee, for their

hard work and for sending a clear message to our government and our people that pain is a major public health problem that deserves much greater attention and focus.

Pain is not only the leading cause of visits to health care professionals, but the economic costs of chronic pain in added health care costs, lost productivity and lost income is enormous. The toll in human suffering, much of it potentially unnecessary, is of even greater concern to people with pain and their families.

We hope that this landmark report sounds the siren call for greater attention to pain issues by both public and private sector policymakers and by the nation as a whole. We hope the recommendations of the report lay a clear path toward much needed improvements in pain research, care, education and treatment.

The American Academy of Pain Medicine is the premiere medical association for pain physicians and their treatment teams with over 2,400 members. Now in its 27th year of service, the Academy's mission is to optimize the health of patients in pain and eliminate it as a major public health problem by advancing the practice and the specialty of pain medicine through education, training, advocacy and research. Information is available on the practice of pain medicine at www.painmed.org.

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