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Academy of Pain Medicine Announces Two-Day Course for Safe Prescribing for Your Primary Physician

November 4, 2011, Glenview, IL — On the cusp of the recent Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) report about the growing death toll from prescription drug deaths, the physician leadership of the American Academy of Pain Medicine (AAPM) announced its plans to roll-out a new education initiative: Safe Opioid Prescribing: Reversing the Trends.

Debuting as a two-day course that will be held in Palm Springs, CA, in February 2012, the Safe Opioid Prescribing program is based on clinical research and data in the field of pain medicine that has been effective in minimizing the risks and reducing the number of deaths associated with opioid prescribing for chronic pain by educating family physicians, internists and other primary care clinicians.

“We have been deeply concerned about the serious public health problem of unintentional overdose deaths from prescription medications. The Safe Opioid Prescribing program is one way we are actively seeking to make a difference in this issue by sharing our expertise with other clinicians, who may not be as aware of the most relevant information in prescribing and the practice of pain medicine,” President Perry G. Fine, MD said.

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As the lead clinical experts in the specialty of pain, the physician leaders from the American Academy of Pain Medicine have dedicated countless hours to problem-solving on this issue, including:

- Collaborating with the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP).
- Working with Senator Jay Rockefeller (D-WV) and others to seek better pain care.
- Providing clinical testimony to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) around the Risk Evaluation and Mitigation Strategy (REMS) for long-acting and extended-release opioid drugs.
- Collaborating with the Federal State Medical Boards (FSMB) to effect responsible prescribing patterns among all physicians of every specialty.
- Accrediting a second edition of AAPM's Past President's Scott Fishman, MD's "Responsible Opioid Prescribing" publication, which has become an authoritative reference for safe prescribing.
- Ongoing education to the medical community about the latest science and treatments for pain. The [June 2011](#) issue of the Academy's journal, *Pain Medicine* published a series of manuscripts describing the complexities of the problem of safe prescribing, but also identified where significant progress has been made to curb and reverse this serious issue.

"We strongly believe that prescribers, policymakers, and our communities must work collaboratively to ensure all patients who need prescription medication have access to them but are safely and appropriately prescribed and consumed," Dr. Fine added.

These efforts align perfectly with the recently released CDC report, which concludes "Improving the way prescription painkillers are prescribed can reduce the number of people who misuse, abuse or overdose from these powerful drugs, while making sure patients have access to safe, effective treatment."

The Academy's Safe Opioid Prescribing Program has the statistical base of proof that reversing the trends is indeed possible. It is based on a successful pilot program that was launched in 2007 in Utah through the Utah Department of Health (UDOH), when a public awareness and provider educational program effectively reversed trends of unintentional drug deaths in the state.

“After the first year of the 2007 campaign, the state experienced its largest decreases in prescription drug deaths since 1994,” AAPM Board Member Lynn Webster, MD said, citing the UDOH findings.

“These findings were remarkable,” Webster said. And, that is when he began building the foundation of what is now the AAPM’s Safe Opioid Prescribing curriculum that uses the experts in pain and the science of prescribing to help inform clinicians and ultimately patients and their families how to safely prescribe, use pain medications and to find ways to reverse the trends of overdose, death and diversion.”

“It’s a well-known axiom: if you want the most trusted and reliable information, go to the most reliable resource,” said Dr. Webster. “We have invested so much time and energy researching and preparing to share our success and expertise with others for the good of society. This is a program that every physician should plan to attend,” Webster said.

More information about the Safe Opioid Prescribing: Reversing the Trends Course, as well as the other programs of the Academy will be posted on the AAPM website when available at www.painmed.org.

The American Academy of Pain Medicine is the premiere association for 2,400 pain physicians and their treatment teams. Now in its 28th year of service, the Academy's mission is to optimize the health of patients in pain and eliminate it as a major health public health problem by advancing the practice in the specialty of pain medicine. More information is available at www.painmed.org.

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