



4700 W. Lake Avenue
Glenview, IL 60025
847/375-4731 • Fax 877/734-8750
Web site: www.painmed.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 3, 2004

Contact: Susan M. Thompson
Director of Marketing & Communications
sthompson@painmed.org 847/375-3686

AAPM Releases Statement on the National Drug Control Strategy and the Appropriate Use of Controlled Substances

Orlando, FL – Wednesday, March 03, 2004– The American Academy of Pain Medicine (AAPM) remains concerned about and strongly opposed to the diversion and abuse of controlled substances and supports law enforcement efforts to stop these criminal activities. Today at the AAPM annual meeting, the Board of Director voted to endorse a consensus document to clarify the rights and responsibilities of healthcare professionals in the use of opioids for the treatment of pain.

Although the problem of prescription drug abuse is not necessarily a result of inappropriate prescribing by physicians, the AAPM stands ready to work toward better and safer prescribing of opioid medications and all pain relievers. We are concerned for the welfare of all Americans who suffer needlessly in pain and recognize that solutions to problems of drug abuse must also address the needs of patients to have access to safe and effective treatments. The AAPM is committed to the education of all medical students and physicians as an essential component of addressing these critical issues surrounding the treatment of pain.

The AAPM stresses the need for balance, as there is also another issue of great importance to public health resulting from the inadequate treatment of patients in pain. Millions of people suffer unnecessarily because of barriers to effective pain treatment. Misconceptions about addiction are paramount among these barriers. When opioids are prescribed and used appropriately in the treatment of pain there is little danger of creating an addictive disorder. The public health problem represented by misuse of prescription opioids is far outweighed by the problem of untreated and unrelenting pain. Patients with acute pain or pain from cancer, AIDS, and other serious diseases should not fear the use of opioids, which are safe when used appropriately.

The American Academy of Pain Medicine worked with the U.S. Congress to declare this the Decade of Pain Control and Research; worked with the Federation of State Medical Boards to create clinical guidelines for the appropriate use of opioid medications in treating pain; and has developed educational programs for physicians on pain assessment, opioid usage, detection of addiction, and prevention of diversion. The American Academy of Pain Medicine is the organization representing physicians who specialize in treating complex pain disorders.

###