American Academy of Pain Medicine Endorses First Comprehensive National Pain Strategy

March 28, 2016, CHICAGO, Ill – The Board of Directors of the American Academy of Pain Medicine (AAPM) enthusiastically endorses the National Pain Strategy (NPS) issued earlier this month by the US Department of Health and Human Services. “For AAPM to issue such a formal endorsement is unusual,” said AAPM President Daniel B. Carr, MD, indicating the importance of this first comprehensive Federal-level plan addressing how pain will be assessed and cared for nationally. The NPS was prepared through an open, public process by an interprofessional committee, including patients and advocates, assembled by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and co-chaired by Linda Porter, PhD, of NIH and Sean Mackey, MD, PhD, of Stanford University.

“The Academy is proud to endorse this influential white paper, to which many of its members have contributed along with – and themselves as – patient advocates, researchers and clinicians,” said Dr. Carr. “More than a dozen AAPM leaders starting with NPS co-chair and AAPM Past President Sean Mackey, helped shape this strategy as members of its oversight panel, work group participants or expert consultants. Every American concerned with pain and its prevention or treatment can view the NPS as a source of priorities including funding decisions now and in years to come.” A multi-year action plan, the NPS spells out specific steps in six dimensions that comprise a system-level approach to improving how pain is addressed in America. These dimensions are population research, prevention and care, disparities, service delivery and reimbursement, professional education and training, and public education and communication.

In its press release accompanying the NPS, the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Health described it as “a roadmap toward achieving a system of care in which all people achieve appropriate, high quality and evidence-based care for pain.” Karen B. DeSalvo, MD, MPH, MSc, the Acting Assistant Secretary of Health noted, “This report identifies the key steps we can take to improve how we prevent, assess and treat pain in this country.” Preparation of the NPS followed a mandate for a comprehensive, coordinated nation-wide action plan called for by the Institute of Medicine (IOM, now National Academy of Medicine) in its landmark 2011 white paper “Relieving Pain in America: A Blueprint for Transforming Prevention, Care, Education, and Research.”

“Successful implementation of the strategic goals in the NPS will create the cultural transformation of pain prevention, care and education called for in the IOM Pain Report and desperately needed for the American public,” said Dr. Mackey. He and NPS co-chair Linda Porter guided this diverse interprofessional panel through two years of deliberations and refinement of successive drafts.

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The NPS is available at http://iprcc.nih.gov/docs/HHSNational_Pain_Strategy.pdf. In its vision statement, the NPS predicts that if its “objectives…are achieved, the nation would see a decrease in prevalence across the continuum of pain, from acute, to chronic, to high-impact chronic pain, and across the life span from pediatric through geriatric populations, to end of life, which would reduce the burden of pain for individuals, families, and society as a whole. Americans experiencing pain would have timely access to a care system that … takes into account individual preferences, risks, and social contexts.”

About AAPM
Now in its 33rd year, the American Academy of Pain Medicine (AAPM) is the premier medical association for pain physicians and their treatment teams. AAPM is committed to ensuring the safety, efficacy and cost-effectiveness of patient care through evidence-based care, patient-centered research, public and professional education, and science-based policy.

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