

# PAIN MANAGEMENT BEST PRACTICES INTER-AGENCY TASK FORCE

## FACTSHEET EDUCATION



Acute and chronic pain education for patients, families, caregivers, clinicians, and policymakers is **vital to enhancing pain care**. **Education is critical** to the delivery of effective, patient-centered pain management, improving patient clinical outcomes (quality of life and functioning), appropriate use of medication, eliminating stigma, lowering risks associated with prescription opioids, and forming a therapeutic alliance between the clinician and patient.



Chronic pain affects  
**50 MILLION  
U.S. ADULTS.**



**19.6 MILLION  
ADULTS**

experience high-impact chronic pain that interferes with daily life or work activities.



**THERE IS A  
SIGNIFICANT NEED**

for better societal education and understanding of both acute and chronic pain to provide understanding of challenges related to pain care.

## DID YOU KNOW?

### FOR PATIENTS AND THE PUBLIC



Chronic pain is considered a disease.



Pain is a general term to refer to dozens of various, often complex, medical conditions and pain syndromes, including neurologic disorders, musculoskeletal conditions, and inflammatory diseases.



The goal of pain management is to restore functional abilities and overall quality of life.



## FOR CLINICIANS

- There is a need for more education regarding acute and chronic pain for all clinicians in professional school curricula, postgraduate education, continuing education, and specialty training. Better understanding and knowledge of pain treatment modalities and early referral to pain specialists can improve acute and chronic pain care.
- The Extension for Community Healthcare Outcomes (Project ECHO) is one of many effective models for improving pain care education. Project ECHO is based on workplace learning, with cases selected by participants from their patient panels combined with short lectures by experts (referred to as telementoring and a “hub-and-spoke model”).

## FOR POLICYMAKERS

- The issue of pain management is complicated, so every decision made, law passed, or guideline issued has a cascading effect on many aspects of pain management. As such, a deep understanding of the issues, especially the potential for unintended consequences of these decisions, is essential in formulating effective comprehensive policy.
- Support for education, time, and financial resources for physicians of various disciplines, dentists, nurses, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, pharmacists, physical therapists, occupational therapists, behavioral health specialists, psychologists, social workers, integrative health practitioners, and others is essential to managing patients who have painful conditions.
- Education for the public as well as for policymakers and legislators helps ensure that expert and cutting-edge information is part of policy and implementation that can affect clinical care and outcomes.



## LEARN MORE

- **PUBLIC:** Learn about how acute and chronic pain affects millions of Americans from factsheets and infographics on the Task Force website at <https://www.hhs.gov/ash/advisory-committees/pain/index.html> and in the final Report at <https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pmtf-final-report-2019-05-23.pdf>.
- **PATIENTS:** Empower yourself in your pain management decision making. Visit the Task Force website to find educational resources you can use to find the best treatment for you at <https://www.hhs.gov/ash/advisory-committees/pain/index.html>.
- **PROVIDERS:** Review the free pain management resources for providers included in the Report’s **Federal Resources Center** at <https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pmtf-final-report-2019-05-23.pdf>.
- **POLICYMAKERS:** Consider supporting a national evidence-based pain awareness campaign that promotes the understanding of acute and chronic pain conditions. Visit the Task Force website to find educational resources to learn more on how you can influence pain management policy at <https://www.hhs.gov/ash/advisory-committees/pain/index.html>.
- For more information check out the HHS Blog post at <https://www.hhs.gov/blog/2019/05/10/patient-centered-care-is-key-to-best-practices-in-pain-management.html>.

