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**17 CONSUMER GROUPS UNITE AROUND RELEASE OF FIRST-EVER
NATIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN TO ADDRESS CRISIS OF CHRONIC PAIN**
*Patients, Caregivers, Pain Advocates Call for Plan's Swift Implementation
through Creation of Oversight Body and Designated Dollars*



Washington, April 7, 2015—To address the urgent public health crisis of chronic pain in America, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has released a draft of the newly developed [National Pain Strategy](#) (NPS) and is soliciting comments from the public. The Consumer Pain Advocacy Task Force—a new coalition of seventeen consumer organizations and advocacy groups created specifically to promote, support and monitor the implementation of the NPS—is calling for HHS to proactively develop a federal oversight body and start the budgeting process now, so that HHS can swiftly commence implementation of the plan as soon as it is approved and released.

The National Pain Strategy is the first-ever, comprehensive, population-level strategic plan to advance pain research, education, care and prevention, and was developed in response to the imminent need to transform how pain is perceived, assessed and treatment in America. The NPS process began after the seminal 2011 Institute of Medicine (IOM) report, *Relieving Pain in America*, determined that over 100 million American adults live with life-altering chronic pain, at an annual economic cost burden of \$600 billion. This equals a national epidemic with costs far exceeding that of any other disease state or disorder in the U.S.

“Developed by six federal health agencies and 80 well-respected experts from the medical-scientific, public, private, federal, patient and advocacy communities, the NPS represents hope for the millions of Americans and their loved ones affected by devastating chronic pain,” states Amy Goldstein, MSW, one of the 17 members of the Consumer Pain Advocacy Task Force. “Now, we must ensure that adequate funding is allocated for this effort and that the NPS is implemented in a coordinated and efficient manner to enact long-overdue change in the lives of people who are suffering gravely. The CPATF applauds HHS for its leadership on this issue, and stands ready to do its part to support the Department and federal agencies in the implementation process.”

The CPATF is encouraging a robust and diverse community response during the NPS public comment period, and is asking other consumer groups to join its efforts to promote the plan's implementation, as well as raise general awareness of the challenges impacting those with chronic pain. The CPATF unites around the following beliefs, which guide the group's collective work:

- Chronic pain is a real and complex disease that may exist by itself or along with another medical condition
- Chronic pain is an unrecognized and under-resourced public health crisis with devastating personal and economic impact
- Effective pain care requires access to a wide range of treatment options
- Allowing people to suffer with unmanaged pain is immoral and unethical

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About the Consumer Pain Advocacy Task Force (CPATF)

Formed in 2014, CPATF is a coalition of seventeen consumer organizations working to improve the well-being of those living with pain. With decades of combined advocacy experience, CPATF members know first-hand the hardships of people living with pain, as well as know how crucial a national action plan addressing this complex public health crisis is. CPATF Members include: American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network; American Chronic Pain Association; C-Change; Chronic Pain Research Alliance; Global Health Living Foundation; Interstitial Cystitis Association; National Fibromyalgia & Chronic Pain Association; National Patient Advocate Foundation; Pain Connection; PAINS; Power of Pain Foundation; Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy Syndrome Association; State Pain Policy Advocacy Network; The Foundation for Peripheral Neuropathy; The Pain Community; The TMJ Association; and US Pain Foundation. For more information, please visit www.ConsumerPainAdvocacy.org or contact info@ConsumerPainAdvocacy.org.