

National Pain Strategy—final release from HHS, March 18, 2016

Executive Summary:

In 2010, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) contracted with the Institute of Medicine (IOM) to undertake a study and make recommendations “to increase the recognition of pain as a significant public health problem in the United States.” The resulting 2011 IOM report called for a cultural transformation in pain prevention, care, education, and research and recommended development of “a comprehensive population health-level strategy” to address these issues.¹ In response to the report, the Assistant Secretary for Health, Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) asked the Interagency Pain Research Coordinating Committee (IPRCC) to oversee creation of this National Pain Strategy (NPS). Experts from a broad array of public and private organizations explored areas identified in the core IOM recommendations—population research, prevention and care, disparities, service delivery and reimbursement, professional education and training, and public awareness and communication. A companion effort is underway to address the IOM’s call for further research to support the cultural transformation. As articulated in the IOM report, efforts to reduce the burden of pain in the United States cannot be achieved without an expanded and sustained investment in basic and clinical research on the biopsychosocial mechanisms that produce and maintain chronic pain and development of safe and effective pain treatments. As a first step to respond to the full set of research recommendations of the IOM, the IPRCC and the NIH completed a comprehensive analysis of the existing federal pain research portfolio. The next step is development of the Federal Pain Research Strategy which will complement the NPS. It will identify gaps in our research agenda and recommend directions for new research to guide federal entities in their support of essential pain research programs.