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OBAMA ADMINISTRATION TO REQUIRE PHYSICIAN TRAINING FOR PRESCRIBING ADDICTIVE PAIN KILLERS

National Medical Society Supports Training Standards for Prescription Pain Killers to Help Control Nationwide Prescription Drug Abuse Epidemic

NEW YORK, MAY 5, 2011 – The American Society of Interventional Pain Physicians (ASIPP), a physicians group dedicated to the promotion, development and use of safe and appropriate pain treatments including the appropriate use of medication and Interventional Pain Management techniques, supports the federal government's recent announcement to tighten rules for prescribing medication. The Obama administration is seeking legislation making it mandatory for medical professionals to undergo physician training prior to prescribing drugs such as OxyContin, fentanyl, hydromorphone and methadone.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), more than 27,600 people in the U.S. died unintentionally from drug poisoning in 2007, and more than half of these deaths resulted from opioid pain medication. According to Dr. Laxmaiah Manchikanti, Chairman of the Board of ASIPP, "Americans, constituting only 4.6% of the world's population, have been consuming 80% of the global opioid supply, and 99% of global hydrocodone supply, as well as two-thirds of the world's illegal drugs." He added, "Retail sales of commonly used opioid medications, including methadone, oxycodone, hydromorphone, hydrocodone, morphine, have increased from a total of 50.7 million grams in 1997 to 126.5 million grams in 2007, with an overall increase of 149%. On the same token, average sales of opioids per person have increased from 74 mg in 1997 to 369 mg in 2007, a 402% increase." (Manchikanti L, et al. Therapeutic use, abuse, and nonmedical use of opioids: A ten-year perspective. *Pain Physician* 2010; 13:401-435. <http://www.painphysicianjournal.com/2010/september/2010;13;401-435.pdf>

"If providers are appropriately trained for responsible prescribing of controlled substances, they will be more qualified to determine which patients are candidates for these drugs and avoid doctor shoppers and abusers. At present, the majority of the guidelines are biased and sponsored by makers of the same drugs which are responsible for so many disasters. Radical changes are needed not only with education, but also the guidance and avoidance of conflicts of interest in developing guidelines." <http://www.jsonline.com/watchdog/watchdogreports/119130114.html>

The new initiative is expected to require Congressional approval of an amendment to the Controlled Substances Act, which currently allows the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) to approve licenses for the prescription of pain medication to a doctor with an active license to practice medicine. The amendment would call for doctors to complete formal training in order to renew their prescription licenses. ASIPP, which has offered to assist the Federal Government with the development of this training and certification process, has been offering training and certification in controlled substances for almost 10 years. There are about 600,000 doctors, dentists, and physician assistants licensed by the DEA to prescribe controlled substances, according to Gil Kerikowski, President Obama's top drug policy adviser. In a recent New York Times article, Kerikowski notes that the vast majority of physicians today have not received any special training.

The plan also announces support for prescription drug monitoring program development in all 50 states, which ASIPP has strongly supported for the last 10 years. The society also emphasizes the importance of interconnectivity between state prescription drug monitoring programs because of the ease with which people can travel between states and still defeat these important programs.

Dr. David Kloth, national spokesperson for ASIPP, said, "One of the key components of the Office of National Drug Control Policy's 2011 Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention Plan is the implementation of prescription drug monitoring programs in every state and the sharing of data across states. These programs are an essential tool for both physicians and law enforcement in combating the illegal dispensing and diversion of prescription drugs. These programs will most importantly save lives but will also save states money by reducing prescription expenses through state Medicaid programs."

About The American Society of Interventional Pain Physicians

ASIPP's mission statement is to promote the development and practice of safe, high quality, cost-effective interventional pain management techniques for the diagnosis and treatment of pain and related disorders, and to ensure patient access to these interventions. Founded in 1998 by Chairman of the Board and CEO Laxmaiah Manchikanti, MD, ASIPP is a rapidly growing not-for-profit organization that supports the access to interventional techniques and the needs of physicians who practice accountable Interventional Pain Management across the country.

Since its inception, the organization has had substantial impact on the practice of interventional pain management, resulting in an impressive list of major achievements. In 2005, ASIPP succeeded in passing The National All Schedules Prescription Electronic Reporting Act (NASPER), which provides and improves patient access to quality care, and protects patients and physicians from the deleterious effects of controlled substance misuse, abuse and trafficking. ASIPP is headquartered in Paducah, KY and currently has 4,500 members. For more information, visit www.asipp.org or call 270.554.9412. Ext. 215

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