

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Chair, Energy and Commerce Comm.
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Greg Walden
Ranking Member, Energy and Commerce Comm.
2322-A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Anna Eshoo
Chair, Energy and Commerce Health Subc.
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Rep. Mike Burgess
Ranking Member, Energy and Commerce Health Subc.
2322-A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Diana DeGette
Chair, Energy and Commerce O&I Subc.
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Brett Guthrie
Ranking Member, Energy and Commerce O&I Subc.
2322-A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Pallone, Ranking Member Walden, Health Subcommittee Chair Eshoo, Health Ranking Member Burgess, O&I Chair DeGette and O&I Ranking Member Guthrie:

We the undersigned organizations respectfully request that you convene hearings to be held on implementation of the SUPPORT for Patients and Communities Act, particularly the recommendations released in May by the HHS Pain Management Best Practices Inter-Agency Task Force ("Task Force"), authorized by the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA) of 2016.

As you know, the SUPPORT for Patients and Communities Act, spearheaded by the Energy and Commerce Committee, recently passed its one-year anniversary. This landmark legislation has the potential to continue to help us make significant progress on many fronts to address the myriad issues associated with the opioid crisis. One of the SUPPORT Act provisions requires CMS to develop an opioid action plan to help mitigate opioid abuse and misuse, improve the management of acute and chronic pain and consider the recommendations of the Task Force in issuing the final action plan.

The Task Force was mandated by Congress to identify gaps and inconsistencies in pain management. A total of 29 experts from relevant disciplines, including both pain management and substance abuse, were appointed to the group. After a year of deliberation, public hearings, and careful review of current literature, the Task Force produced a final report in May 2019 with a series of comprehensive, common-sense recommendations.

We believe it is incumbent on the Committee to ensure that CMS includes the recommendations of the Task Force in its action plan and exercises its authority to update its reimbursement and coverage policies to treat acute and chronic pain.

The undersigned organizations endorse the Task Force's recommendations, as they provide an essential blueprint for balancing the need to effectively manage pain and reduce the opioid crisis. The recommendations in the final Task Force report have been widely applauded and were backed by a number of leading organizations, including the American Medical Association, the American Association of Physicians and Surgeons, Human Rights Watch, the Society of Anesthesiologists, and the American Society of Interventional Pain Physicians. Notably, the American Medical Association called the recommendations a "roadmap for future policy."

Key recommendations of the Task Force:

- Encourage a multidisciplinary approach to pain care, with improved access to and coverage of multidisciplinary treatment options including evidence-based complementary and integrative care;
- Treat pain on an individualized basis, without one-size-fits-all rules or policies;
- Develop and disseminate public, patient, provider and policymaker education about pain in order to eliminate stigma and deliver effective, patient-centered care

Our organizations and provider groups recognize that the millions of Americans currently living with chronic pain, as a result of a myriad of diseases, conditions and serious injuries are a vulnerable population of individuals who are both underserved and undertreated. The Task Force report recommendations, if implemented, would represent enormous progress toward effectively managing the complex and costly consequences of pain, including its impact on the opioid crisis.

Congress mandated the task force and called for its recommendations; we collectively urge that Congress now prioritize reviewing and implementing these forward-thinking, proactive recommendations.

Respectively submitted,

American Massage Therapy Association
Alliance for Balanced Pain Management
Center for Practical Bioethics
Center for U.S. Policy
CHAMP (Coalition for Headache and Migraine Patients)
Integrative Health Policy Consortium
Interstitial Cystitis Association
Project Lazarus
U.S. Pain Foundation