

Spotlight On Health

Raising Your Voice To Help Fight Pain

(NAPSA)—You may be crying out in pain or suffering in silence. Either way, you are not alone. Seeking medical treatment for pain can be a long, frustrating process. The majority of America's 75 million serious pain sufferers go untreated or undertreated.

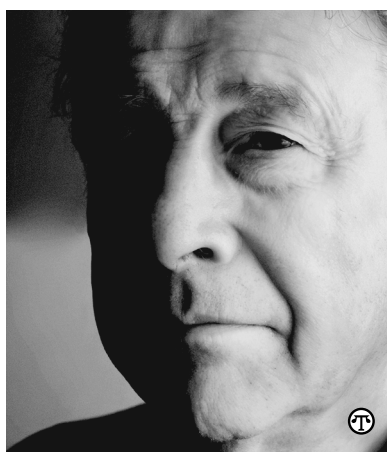
Four in 10 people with chronic pain do not go to the doctor for their pain because they believe that nothing can be done to treat it. Additionally, Will Rowe, executive director of the American Pain Foundation (APF), says even people who do visit doctors for pain do not always receive appropriate treatment.

"Doctors may not treat pain aggressively because they lack knowledge about pain treatment, or they may be concerned about raising red flags from regulators who oversee opioid prescriptions," says Rowe.

Fortunately, pain sufferers are beginning to help each other find treatment and be advocates for change. For instance, Dan O'Neil imagined a retirement filled with travel and physical activity until he injured his back at the end of his career.

Now a serious pain sufferer, O'Neil has taken on his disability and advocated for the pain rights of others through the APF's Power Over Pain Action Network. The network is part of the Power Over Pain (POP) public awareness and advocacy campaign in which members work together on national and state-based positive pain policy, media and educational efforts.

"By raising our voices," O'Neil says, "we can raise public awareness, remove the barriers that prevent people from receiving pain care, and help pain sufferers take back their lives." The APF offers both support and advocacy opportunities, including:



Americans are working together to help sufferers of serious pain.

- PainAid, an online support community that connects people affected by pain. Participants can ask questions, share experiences or simply read what others have written.

- People in pain can tell their story in writing or on audiotape that is shared through the "Voices of People Affected by Pain" collection.

- Regular online surveys provide direction to the APF, and by filling out the Advocacy Survey, people can let APF know what skills they'd like to contribute to the public awareness and advocacy efforts.

- The APF Online Advocacy Center, where people can quickly and easily send a letter to representatives to emphasize the importance of proposed legislation such as the National Pain Care Policy Act.

If you are interested in advocating to improve pain management, you can get more information or join the effort by visiting the Power Over Pain section of www.painfoundation.org to contact your state POP Action Network Leader.