



spotlight on health

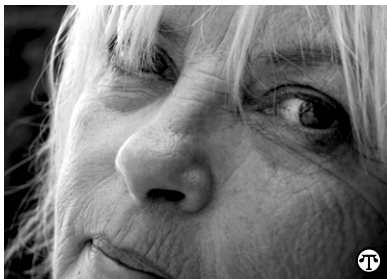
Overcoming Barriers To Pain Relief

(NAPSA)—Calling the undertreatment of pain in America a “human, healthcare, and economic crisis,” the American Pain Foundation wants to raise public awareness about pain relief.

More than 75 million Americans suffer from acute or chronic pain every year. Acute pain can be caused by surgery, injury or infection and usually goes away when the underlying problem is treated. Chronic pain may also result from an injury, as well as a long-term disease or condition that is more difficult for health care professionals to either diagnose or treat. More than two out of five pain sufferers experience such severe pain that they are unable to work, and almost two-thirds are unable to perform the basic activities of daily living. In fact, chronic pain costs Americans over \$100 billion a year in medical expenses, lost wages and lost productivity.

Beyond dollars and cents, pain can take a heavy toll on those who suffer and their family and friends. Left untreated, chronic pain has the potential to rob a person’s quality of life—affecting their physical, psychological, social and spiritual sense of well-being. Pain can be a sign of illness and provide a useful tool for doctors to measure and monitor a patient’s health. That is why it’s important to talk to your health care provider about your pain and the most appropriate pain treatments based on your unique needs and health profile.

“The real tragedy,” says American Pain Foundation director Will Rowe, “is that try as they may, many people do not find relief, even when effective treatments exist.”



People too often don’t get the appropriate care they need to effectively manage their pain.

The reasons for the undertreatment of pain come from multiple fronts. They include health care providers’ lack of proper education or inappropriate attitudes; patient and family fears and misconceptions; lack of responsiveness in the health care system; and inadequate insurance coverage or availability of medication in certain pharmacies. There are also barriers to pain relief in the drug regulation system, where misguided efforts to fight drug abuse sometimes result in policies that impede medical treatments and stimulate fear of investigation among health care professionals.

Despite these barriers to getting pain relief, the American Pain Foundation wants people to know that their pain is real, that they have a right to have their pain taken seriously, and the right to be treated with dignity and respect by their health care providers.

To get some straight facts about pain, to find out more about managing pain effectively, and to learn how to become an advocate to improve pain management for yourself and others, contact the American Pain Foundation at www.painfoundation.org or by calling 1-888-615-PAIN (7246).