

Spotlight On Health

Addressing A “Painful” Communication Gap

(NAPSA)—A nationwide survey found that a sizable gap exists between patients and healthcare professionals when it comes to understanding and discussing pain. To address this discrepancy, a new coalition of leading pain management organizations has formed to improve how patients and healthcare professionals communicate with each other.

The *Let's Talk Pain* Coalition is the first of its kind to unite the perspectives of patients, caregivers and healthcare professionals to encourage people to talk more about pain, listen actively and act in ways that improve care for the millions of people who live with pain. The organizations behind *Let's Talk Pain* have created a new interactive Web site, www.letstalkpain.org, to provide visitors with comprehensive information and tools to help enhance the dialogue between those affected by pain and healthcare professionals.

Among other resources, the site offers videos highlighting patient and healthcare professional success stories, communication checklists and pain definitions. Here are just a few of the tips the Coalition suggests for improving the pain dialogue:

For Patients

- Don't be afraid to speak up. Only you know the extent of your pain.
- Download a pain journal to record the frequency and intensity of your pain.
- Take note of how well your treatment plan is working and what makes your pain worse or better.
- Bring a relative or friend to your appointments for support and to help take notes and remember what was said.
- Become familiar with pain terms and conditions and learn more about how pain is assessed.



An interactive new Web site may help open channels of communication regarding pain.

For Healthcare Professionals

- Developing open lines of communication with patients is critical to achieving successful treatment outcomes.
- Know that simply acknowledging a patient's pain has been shown to have profound therapeutic results.
- Leading pain expert Dr. Scott Fishman, chair and president of the American Pain Foundation and chief of the Division of Pain Medicine, and professor of anesthesiology at the University of California at Davis, offers communication tips for healthcare professionals on the site, and discusses the impact of treatment side effects and different approaches to opioid therapies.

Founding members of the *Let's Talk Pain* Coalition are the American Pain Foundation, the American Society for Pain Management Nursing, and the American Academy of Pain Management. PriCara™, Division of Ortho-McNeil-Janssen Pharmaceuticals, Inc. is the sponsor of the Coalition.

For more information, visit www.letstalkpain.org. The site encourages visitors to share their own pain stories and provides access to the Coalition's pain experts.