



## Key Messages about Pain

Pain is a national healthcare crisis. It is our nation's hidden epidemic.

- According to the Institute of Medicine, over 100 million adults in the United States suffer from common chronic pain conditions.<sup>1</sup>
- The annual cost of chronic pain in the U.S. is estimated to be \$560-635 billion, including healthcare expenses and lost productivity.<sup>1</sup>

When pain is properly managed, many people can resume their lives.

- Finding good pain care can be a challenge, but persistence can pay off – don't give up.
- Learn about available treatment options. Often, pain management requires an integrative and multi-modal treatment approach. This could mean combining the use of pain medication with surgical interventions and complementary approaches like physical therapy, massage and acupuncture. But, remember that pain is unique – what works for you might not work for someone else.
- People often mistakenly believe that pain is something they “just have to live with.” They are often made to feel that the pain is “just in their heads.” Seek out support and offer it to others in their pain journey; validation and letting someone know that you believe their reports of pain can be a lifeline!

People who live with pain have a right to appropriate assessment and treatment of their pain.

- While pain can affect anyone regardless of gender, race or economic status, some people have difficulty getting adequate pain care. Women, certain ethnic groups, the elderly and the uninsured are more likely to be denied appropriate pain treatment.<sup>2-4</sup>
- People who suffer from pain and their loved ones need to speak with their healthcare professional and take an active role in managing their pain.
- Pain can and should be treated. We all have a right to proper medical care.

Medication adherence, storage safety and disposal of medications are important components of appropriate pain management.

- Nearly three out of four Americans report that they do not always take their medications as directed.<sup>5</sup>
- Failure to take medications as instructed is not just an individual's problem; it impacts everyone – as patients, caregivers, family members, employers, health care professionals, and taxpayers.
- Some medications have special storage instructions, such as keeping out of the heat or light. Also, it is important to safeguard medications in the home:
  - keep medications in a secure location and know how much medication is in the prescription container.
  - encourage friends and relatives, especially grandparents, to also safeguard and regularly monitor the medications in their homes.
  - consult a pharmacist about how to properly dispose of medications that are no longer needed.

## References

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