As a physician specializing in acute/chronic pain care, I applaud the CDC’s opening of a docket request for stakeholder comments on acute and chronic pain management, and your desire to better understand stakeholders’ values and preferences related to these important issues. I look forward to working collaboratively with you to ensure pain patients have access to the full spectrum of treatment options to reduce pain as well as opioid related harms and improve function.

Pain care is at a critical crossroads in America and the need for updated guidelines and educational materials for patients and providers has never been greater. A 2019 Harris Poll of primary care physicians found increasing concerns about the challenge of appropriately treating pain patients and insufficient provider training in pain management -- with 83% of doctors reporting that the opioid crisis makes it harder to treat pain patients and 81% of doctors hesitant to accept new pain patients.

Our specialty societies, and many individual physician members, provided written comments for your review. I write today to respectfully request that the CDC hold a follow-up joint meeting with the leadership of our societies so that the CDC can hear directly from key opinion leaders about advancements in pain management, the multidisciplinary approach to reducing pain and improving function, and the evidence-based technologies and therapies we utilize to improve outcomes and patient lives.

I also respectfully request that the CDC incorporate the HHS Pain Management Best Practices Inter-Agency Task Force (“Task Force”) recommendations, particularly section 2.4 Interventional Procedures. My representative 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 misuse crisis.

Our societies 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 often underserved and stigmatized for the very real problem of chronic pain.

Updated CDC guidelines and pain educational materials would represent enormous progress towards effectively managing the complex and costly consequences of pain, including its impact on the opioid crisis. I and my colleagues urge the CDC to meet with us to help you develop forward-thinking and appropriate recommendations. I may be contacted at cellphone xxx-xxx-xxxx / email xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx.

Respectfully submitted,

NAME