



## American Alliance of Cancer Pain Initiatives

For immediate release  
April 5, 2005

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### **American Alliance of Cancer Pain Initiatives Endorses New Guideline for the Management of Cancer Pain**

*Group urges doctors and nurses to use guideline to improve the quality of life  
for the millions of persons with cancer*

MADISON, WI - A new clinical practice guideline for the management of cancer pain was endorsed today by the American Alliance of Cancer Pain Initiatives (AACPI), a leading national organization dedicated to improving the treatment of pain for persons with cancer. Developed by an interdisciplinary panel of prominent cancer pain experts and released by the American Pain Society earlier this year, the new evidence-based guideline revises and updates the first cancer pain guideline, which was published by the US Agency for Health Care Policy and Research (now the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality) in 1994.

Pain is a common and devastating symptom of cancer. More than 80 percent of persons with cancer will experience pain at sometime during the course of their disease. Yet, despite the availability drug and non-drug therapies that can effectively relieve almost all cancer-related pain, more than one-half of persons with pain do not get adequate relief. Often the pain is severe, especially for persons near the end of life. When left untreated pain greatly diminishes a person's quality of life; it adversely affects one's physical functioning and disrupts appetite and sleep.

"The new guideline will help tackle a major barrier to pain relief, which is the inadequate knowledge on the part of clinicians on how to properly assess and manage cancer pain," said Patrick Coyne, R.N., a Clinical Nurse Specialist and Clinical Director of the Thomas Palliative Care Unit at the Medical College of Virginia Hospitals/Virginia Commonwealth Health Systems, and chair-elect of the AACPI. Coyne also served on the expert panel that wrote the guideline.

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“The AACPI and our network of State Pain Initiatives strongly encourage all health care professionals who provide care to persons with cancer to use the guideline,” said Coyne. The guideline stresses that all cancer patients should be assessed for pain at each outpatient or hospital visit, and encourages patients and family caregivers to take an active part in the treatment plan.

The AACPI advises persons with cancer pain and family members to speak up when pain is not managed well, become familiar with the medicines and other therapies used to treat pain, and not let fears of addiction or side effects from the pain medicine keep them from taking the medicines they need to get adequate relief. “Addiction rarely occurs in persons with cancer who take pain medicines, and side effects like nausea and constipation can be easily treated,” said Coyne.

Health care professionals can purchase the guideline from the American Pain Society by calling 847-375-4715, or ordering online at [www.ampainsoc.org](http://www.ampainsoc.org).

Patients and families can obtain a question and answer guide, *Cancer Pain Can Be Relieved*, and a companion pamphlet titled *8 Facts Everyone Should Know About Cancer Pain* are available for a nominal cost through the Resource Center of the AACPI at <http://wiscinfo.doit.wisc.edu/trc/>, or by calling 608-262-0978.

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*The **American Alliance of Cancer Pain Initiatives** is the leading national organization dedicated to improving cancer pain management. The AACPI is a network of state-based Pain Initiatives, which are organizations of health care professionals, medical researchers, educators, and patient advocates. State Pain Initiatives work to remove the barriers that impede effective pain relief through education, advocacy, and institutional and practice change. For more information visit [www.aacpi.wisc.edu](http://www.aacpi.wisc.edu).*

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