



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Groups Encourage Government to Do More to Prevent Opioid Addiction
Letter Bemoans Government-Issued Guidance that Fails to Incentivize Utilization of Non-Opioid Approaches

WASHINGTON, DC, October 1, 2019 – Last week, 24 leading advocacy organizations joined Voices for Non-Opioid Choices (“Voices”) in sending a letter to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) expressing disappointment over recent guidance that limits the availability of non-opioid pain management approaches for acute pain patients treated in a hospital outpatient setting.

The guidance, as issued in the proposed rule entitled, “Proposed Changes to Hospital Outpatient Prospective Payment and Ambulatory Surgical Center Payment Systems and Quality Reporting Programs,” does not go far enough to “appropriately incentivize the utilization of all evidence-based, medically appropriate non-opioid pain management approaches,” according to the letter issued by the groups.

“Suffering from pain is a personal experience that, if left undertreated or mismanaged, can radically change an individual’s quality of life. We believe that utilizing a patient-centered, multidisciplinary, multimodal treatment approach to pain management can reduce the reliance on opioids as a primary pain management modality, thus helping curb the prescribed opioid epidemic,” said Kathryn Jansky, MHS, CRNA, APRN USA LTC (ret), President of the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists. “In order to combat this opioid crisis, we need to utilize every tool at our disposal to help patients manage their pain in an appropriate and responsible way, including by offering alternatives to minimize unnecessary patient exposure to opioids.”

The groups call on CMS to revise their draft guidance to provide separate reimbursement for non-opioid therapies given to patients in a hospital outpatient setting. In doing so, the groups point to the opportunity for CMS to prevent opioid addiction in this country by better “incentivize[ing] the utilization of... the plethora of available pharmacologic and non-pharmacologic non-opioid approaches and therapies.”

“The Administration, led by the President, has put out a strong call to use every resource at our disposal to release the grip of opioid addiction – and we believe CMS has not taken the opportunity to answer that call,” said Chris Fox, Executive Director of Voices, who led the effort to weigh in with CMS. “Unfortunately, by neglecting to separately reimburse for non-opioid approaches used in the hospital outpatient setting, CMS is

potentially denying access to these non-addictive alternatives for the millions of Americans treated in this setting every year.”

In total, the letter was signed by 25 organizations, including the: American Association of Orthopaedic Surgeons, American Association of Nurse Anesthetists, American Psychological Association, Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America, Healthcare Leadership Council, National Safety Council, Partnership for Drug-Free Kids + Center on Addiction, and Society for Opioid Free Anesthesiology, among others.

To read the letter in its entirety, please click [here](#).

To learn more about Voices, its work, or for a full list of its members, please visit its website at www.nonopioidchoices.org.

About Voices for Non-Opioid Choices

Voices for Non-Opioid Choices is a nonpartisan coalition dedicated to preventing opioid addiction before it starts by increasing patient access to non-opioid therapies and approaches to manage acute pain. To learn more visit www.nonopioidchoices.org or follow [@nonopioidchoice](https://twitter.com/nonopioidchoice) on Twitter.

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