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Leading National Groups Release Policy Roadmap to Bolster Acute Pain Care and Address Addiction

Consensus document will become policy platform for Voices for Non-Opioid Choices in 2020

WASHINGTON, DC— Voices for Non-Opioid Choices (Voices) – 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 – released a white paper today highlighting policy measures to prevent opioid misuse through increased access to the wide array of non-opioid pain management approaches.

The white paper reflects the consensus of leaders in health, recovery, family support, and industry who gathered in Washington, DC in December to address the ongoing opioid crisis. The event – the “Solutions Summit: Policies to Address Acute Pain and Opioid Addiction in America” – was the first of its kind, bringing together a wide array of stakeholders dedicated to increasing patient choice and access to non-opioid alternatives.

Participants at the “Solutions Summit” identified the following consensus policy recommendations to increase patient choice in acute pain care:

- *Patients must be educated and informed about all available, safe, and effective options to treat acute pain;*
- *Federal payment policy must reflect a commitment to patient-centered care that takes into account the ongoing opioid crisis;*
- *Health care providers must be trained in the unique needs of patients seeking treatment for acute pain, including postsurgical pain, and the wide range of available options; and*
- *Policymakers must continue to seek solutions to the opioid crisis that support the full range of treatment options necessary for patients in pain.*

These consensus recommendations and principles will drive the work of Voices for Non-Opioid Choices in 2020 and beyond.

The overprescribing of opioids in America contributes to our current opioid epidemic. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that there were more than 191 million opioid prescriptions dispensed in the U.S. in 2017. When it comes to prescriptions to treat postsurgical pain, research shows that patients often face two equally worrisome outcomes: first, as many as 92 percent of patients report having excess opioid pills following a surgical procedure, which are then available for diversion. Second, as many as 6.5 percent of opioid naïve patients – or millions of people – are first exposed to opioids as they recover from surgery and become persistent users and still taking opioids three to six months after their procedure.

The mission of Voices for Non-Opioid Choices is to promote patient and provider choice in acute pain care in order to address these problems. The group strives to make the full array of proven, safe, and effective pain management solutions available to patients and providers, including opioids and non-opioid approaches. Voices – and its 31 member organizations – believe that by making these options more readily available for patients and providers, we can help prevent opioid addiction before it begins.

“Patients should have options in how they manage their postsurgical pain,” said Courtney Hunter, Director of Advocacy and Government Affairs at Center on Addiction, which is a founding member of Voices, as well as a delegate at the Solutions Summit. “Right now, many patients, families, and caregivers are unaware that there are non-opioid options, so we need to do a better job educating and making all Americans aware of these options. This is particularly important for the 23 million Americans currently in recovery.”

“As a nation, we literally are spending trillions of dollars countering the opioid epidemic,” said Chris Fox, Executive Director of Voices. “The White House Council of Economic Advisors estimates that we have spent \$2.5 trillion on this crisis just since 2015. This is an urgent public health crisis that we cannot ignore – taken together, these recommendations will reduce rates of opioid addiction in this country by properly incentivizing the use of non-opioid pain management approaches and making more patients, providers, and families aware of the choices that they have when undergoing a surgical procedure.”

For more information, please visit the Voices 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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