

Thanks for the opportunity to provide commentary on this important area of policy. The Center has worked in the area of aging, end of life and shared decision making for those living at the edges of life for more than 30 years.

This recommendation is specific to the area of chronic pain as a specific disease of the brain. Advances in brain imaging technology reveal that patients with chronic pain have altered pain modulatory circuits as well as structural abnormalities. This evidence that chronic pain disease has only recently been available through advances in the science of the brain. Chronic pain as a disease of the brain needs to be recognized and integrated into the formulation of policy to affect payment systems and provider behavior.

Pain is the single biggest reason Americans see a physician and those who live with chronic pain are some of the most vulnerable in society. Transformative policies such as the recognition of the chronic pain as a diagnosis requiring comprehensive response from clinical providers should modify payment models and require broader and integrative approaches to address the goals of care and needs that PATIENTS identify as critical for the self-management.

Two of the specific policy areas that the development of chronic pain disease as a disease of the mind would most immediately impact would be #2: Transformative policies that improve outcomes for patients living with chronic disease, as comprehensive clinical response would have to accommodate more diverse and patient identified therapeutic remedies. The other policy area that would be immediately impacted is #7: Options of empowering patients to play a greater role in managing their health and meaningfully engaging with their health care providers. If goals of care were based first and foremost on the patient's desired outcomes, a more meaningful experience that integrates palliative, curative and restorative regimens would benefit both patient and provider.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this recommendation.

Sincerely,

John

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