

URGENT: Patient and Practitioner Response to Health and Human Services (HHS) Call for Public Comment – Comment period ENDS APRIL 1, 2019.

Will acupuncturists be included in fed health policy recommendations? You're needed now!

Dear Colleagues:

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Pain Management Best Practices Task Force recently wrote a report entitled, "Draft Report on Pain Management Best Practices: Updates, Gaps, Inconsistencies, and Recommendations," This report is open for public comment until Monday, April 1st, 2019.

The Good News: In this draft, the Task Force very strongly recommends a multidisciplinary approach to pain management, including Complementary and Integrative Health, behavioral health/psychological interventions, as well as restorative movement therapies. Acupuncture is specifically named. This document more clearly and positively includes many types of integrative health providers than any report previously put forth.

The Bad News: Many who are not supportive of integrative approaches are submitting comments arguing for a continued reliance on pharmacological approaches to pain.

How you are needed now: This report represents a quantum leap in HHS pain policy, and as an acupuncturist, it is imperative that you, and as many of us in the Complementary and Integrative Health community as possible, respond positively to the call for public comment.

What this means: The Complementary and Integrative Health Community needs to submit as many positive comments as possible before the April 1st deadline. It would be ideal if we could send in hundreds of comments.

Please help – while there are ways that the draft report could be enhanced, the focus of our comments needs to be positive. Numerous integrative health organizations have submitted suggestions to enhance the HHS document, so for this call HHS just needs to see that there is solid public support for their approach. You do NOT need to critique the document!

Steps for submitting a comment:

1. Please review the sample bullets below to get an idea of what's needed. You can use this as a template for your own comment.
2. Please state one or more of the comments in your own words
3. Submit your comment through the eRulemaking portal here:

<https://www.regulations.gov/comment...>

(If the website is inoperative, send you comment to paintaskforce@hhs.gov)

Please Note:

Submit comments by April 1, 2019.

Refer to docket number: HHS-OS-2018-0027.

Identify yourself as a patient, clinician, or representative of an organization with your name and title.

Our profession needs to be represented in future clinical practice guidelines, government policy documents, and reports such as this. Once a report such as this is accepted, there will be future opportunities to build on the progress.

Feel free to send an email to your patients recommending they write a short note of support as well.

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Sample statements:

Your report represents a leap forward in acute and chronic pain management. I am in strong support of this approach.

As an acupuncturist, I appreciate your recommendation of a multimodal approach to pain and the

use of the biopsychosocial model.

My patients have benefited from acupuncture and integrative care in their management of pain. Making this care more available is critical to the success of our country in overcoming the opioid crisis.

Prioritizing nonpharmacologic approaches to pain will save countless lives. We will not succeed if we just rely on more drugs. An integrative, team based approach that uses restorative movement therapies is critical.

I provide patient-centered care in my clinic, and believe the US healthcare system will benefit from your report.

Your report is comprehensive and thoughtful. Thank you for thinking of the whole person in working on issues of pain.

Thank you for the time and effort you put into writing this tremendous document. We have relied for too long on opioids to treat pain, and that has led to countless deaths and lives damaged. Let's move beyond that narrow and ineffective view.

Restorative therapies are a great addition to an overall pain management plan.

I've found Tai Chi and/or Yoga to be very helpful in my patients' recovery from injuries. Thank you for noting the benefits of this to many aspects of health and healing.