

# PAIN CARE COALITION

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*A National Coalition for Responsible Pain Care*

**American Academy of Pain Medicine • American Pain Society  
American Society of Anesthesiologists**

May 19, 2015

The Honorable Sylvia Mathews Burwell  
Secretary  
Department of Health and Human Services  
Hubert H. Humphrey Building  
200 Independence Avenue SW, 615 F  
Washington, DC 20201

**Re: National Pain Strategy**

Dear Secretary Burwell:

The Pain Care Coalition applauds your Department and its agencies for their work in developing the first ever National Pain Strategy. The Coalition was the first organization to call on government to recognize pain as a public health issue of national concern. Our early advocacy for the National Pain Care Policy Act, joined by the efforts of other national professional, patient and industry groups, led directly to enactment of the Veterans Pain Care Act in 2008, the Military Pain Care Act in 2009, and the important pain care provisions of the Affordable Care Act in 2010. The latter led in turn to the Institute of Medicine's groundbreaking 2011 report on pain, *Relieving Pain in America: A Blueprint for Transforming Prevention, Care, Education and Research*, and to the establishment of the Interagency Pain Research Coordinating Committee ("IPRCC") at NIH.

A comprehensive National Pain Strategy, led by your Department as recommended by the IOM, is the next critical step in addressing this major public health problem. The member professional societies of the Coalition, and many individual members from each, have been proud to work with the NIH, the IPRCC and others throughout government to develop the draft document now open for public comment. As we and others comment on the draft, and work to see the Strategy finalized, we call on your leadership to assure its early and effective implementation.

Implementation of the comprehensive National Pain Strategy can alleviate suffering and improve the lives of countless millions of Americans who now suffer from acute and chronic pain. But realizing those lofty goals will require leadership from the

top, assignment of responsibilities to various agency heads throughout your Department, continuing accountability for progress, and the identification of resources, including funding, necessary to advance the Strategy.

The Pain Care Coalition looks to you and your staff to provide that leadership. You can count on the Coalition, its member societies, and the tens of thousands of professionals that they represent to help in any way we can. We look forward to working with you in this critically important effort.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James P. Rathmell, MD". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "J" and "R".

James P. Rathmell, M.D.  
Chairman

Enclosure