

PLANK 3 - SUPPORTING CONSUMERS

RESOLUTION 3.03:

PROMOTE EVIDENCE-BASED PAIN MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

More than half of all Americans live with chronic pain. More than 40 percent of Americans report that chronic pain interferes with life activities, including their ability to work. Employees experiencing chronic pain are more frequently absent from work and are less productive when in the workplace. Chronic pain and the overuse of prescription painkillers both increase costs for employers. While management of chronic pain is essential, overuse or improper use of prescription painkillers generates substantial costs for employers due to absenteeism, reduced productivity and unnecessary health care expenditures.

The efforts of The Alliance and its members will be amplified and made more effective if public sector employers and public sector health care purchasers adopt approaches to the management of chronic pain that are consistent with the best available evidence. Recent studies have highlighted a variety of effective alternative approaches to managing chronic pain, including:

- » Non-opioid pharmacotherapy
- » Physical therapy
- » Prescribed therapeutic exercise programs
- » Nutrition
- » Acupuncture
- » Chiropractic care
- » Therapeutic massage

- » Counseling and psychotherapy

The Alliance urges state and federal policymakers to include coverage for evidence-based alternative pain management therapies in state and federal health benefit programs, including state Medicaid programs, state employee health benefit programs, the Medicare program and under the Affordable Care Act's regulatory framework. Support for these approaches should include coverage in benefit plan designs, reimbursement and transparent reporting of relevant quality and cost metrics.

Sources:

Midwest Business Group on Health. 2017. Pain management at the worksite. Retrieved at https://higherlogicdownload.s3.amazonaws.com/MBGH/4f7f512a-e946-4060-9575-b27c65545cb8/UploadedImages/Pain_Mgt_Guide/FINAL_MBGH_Pain_Management_Guide_7-30-17.pdf.

National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2017. Pain management and the opioid epidemic: Balancing societal and individual benefits and risks of prescription opioid use. Retrieved at <https://www.nap.edu/catalog/24781/pain-management-and-the-opioid-epidemic-balancing-societal-and-individual>

Bachhuber, M., Slaoner, B., Cunningham, C. et al. Medical cannabis laws and opioid analgesic overdose mortality in the United States, 1999-2010. *JAMA Intern Med.* 2014;174(10):1668-1673.