

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Better access to pain management needed to combat opioid crisis

Calgary (November 13, 2017) - The Coalition for Safe and Effective Pain Management (CSEPM) released a report at the Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addictions' Issues of Substance 2017 conference in Calgary today.

The absence of affordable alternatives to painkillers in Canada's healthcare system has contributed to an over-reliance on opioids as a first-line treatment. The report makes a number of important recommendations that, if implemented, would improve access to medication free pain management and reduce the number of patients being prescribed opioids in Canada.

"More can be done to manage pain without opioids," says Michael Heitshu, chair, CSEPM. "People in Canada face significant barriers to accessing alternative pain management such as psychological treatments, physiotherapy, chiropractic treatments, and occupational therapy because they are not funded by the public healthcare system. Making these services available would reduce the number of Canadians relying on opioids."

"CCSA is proud to be a member of CSEPM, a collaborative of passionate organizations who are working together to help safeguard the health of all Canadians. In raising awareness about the available and evidence informed alternatives to opioid prescribing, this group is putting information in the hands of individuals in pain, so they can make safe and informed decisions about their health," added Rita Notarandrea, CEO, from Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addictions.

"We would also like to see better collaboration between patients and front line health providers when making decisions about how to safely manage their pain. It is important that Canadians know that these alternatives exist and are asking important questions," says Chris Power, CEO, from the Canadian Patient Safety Institute.

The Coalition also recognizes that Canada's opioid crisis is complex and there is a role for opioids in pain management. As such, the Coalition supports an approach to pain management that is compassionate to those in pain and does not stigmatize current or future opioid users.

The interim report can be found at csepm.ca. CSEPM plans to release a more in depth version of the report in winter 2018 and looks forward to working with governments to better tackle the opioid crisis.

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About CSEPM:

The Coalition for Safe and Effective Pain Management was formed in February 2017. The group brings together health system experts, associations of health professionals, and patient organizations to highlight the benefits of non-pharmacological pain management and address the opioid crisis.

CSEPM Members:

Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists

Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction

Canadian Chiropractic Association

Canadian Nurses Association

Canadian Pain Society

Canadian Patient Safety Institute

Canadian Physiotherapy Association

Canadian Psychological Association

Canadian Orthopaedic Association

Institute for Safe Medication Practices Canada and Patients for Patient Safety Canada