

# NIH Research for the Opioid and Chronic Pain Crisis

- ***The Chronic Pain / Opioids Crisis – the most costly US health problem, ever.***
  - Economic: \$1.1 trillion per year [Pain (\$560 to \$635 billion <sup>1</sup>) + Opioids (\$504 billion <sup>2</sup>)].
    - Equal to the combined revenues of 4 largest US companies or 5.6% of the US GDP.
  - Prevalence: 30% of Americans have chronic pain <sup>4</sup>, a complex disease with multiple types.
  - Disability: Back/neck pain and migraine are the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> leading causes of all global disability.<sup>3</sup>
  - Mortality: 115 Americans died daily of licit or illicit opioid-related overdoses in 2016. <sup>5</sup>
- ***Lack of safe & effective pain treatments is a principal cause of the opioids crisis.***
  - With few treatment options, ~81 million American adults in pain <sup>6</sup> are prescribed 80% of the world's opioids <sup>7</sup>.
  - ~6.2 million chronic pain patients are prescribed opioids <sup>6</sup>; these may improve quality of life, or worsen it. <sup>8</sup>
  - ~25% of chronic pain patients prescribed opioids will misuse them and ~10% will become addicted. <sup>9</sup>
- ***Underfunding of NIH research is a principal cause of the lack of pain treatments.***
  - Pharmaceutical companies *develop* drugs, but NIH-funded investigators typically *discover* them.<sup>10</sup>
  - NIH investigators discovered the 2 novel drugs most recently approved just for pain (Lyrica, Prialta, 2004).
  - In 2016, NIH funded 29 times more research on cancer than pain, relative to their US economic costs. <sup>1,4</sup>
- ***Increased NIH research for pain and opioids is a fiscal imperative.***
  - Reducing US costs due to pain and opioids by just 1%, would save \$11 billion per year.
  - Development of novel, safe, effective, and affordable chronic pain therapies would:
    - ... Reduce pain, suffering, disability, and Social Security Disability Insurance claims.
    - ... Reduce opioid over-prescribing, misuse, diversion, addiction, overdose, and criminal justice costs.
    - ... Stimulate the economy with new jobs, higher productivity, and products with huge global markets.
  - The US government is “ultimately on the hook for the costs of illness” - Newt Gingrich. <sup>11</sup>
- ***Bipartisan – “Opioids and STOP Pain Initiative Act of 2017” (S.2260 / H.R.4733)***
  - \$5 billion emergency appropriations over 5 years for new NIH research
    - To understand pain
    - To discover and develop non-addictive pain therapies – pharmacological or non-pharmacological
    - To discover and develop medication-assisted and opioid overdose reversal treatments
  - Provisions:
    - Guided by the “Federal Pain Research Strategy”, a national consensus plan to study pain. <sup>12</sup>
    - Fund the federal contribution to the “Public-Private Partnership” of NIH with Pharma. <sup>13</sup>
    - Create a “Pain Therapeutics Screening Program” to accelerate therapy development.
    - Provide tax credit for donations to the Initiative.
    - Allow “other transaction authority” for NIH Director to focus funds on most promising research.

## **Please Co-Sponsor: Bipartisan S.2260 / H.R.4733**

- Aisling McDonough ([aisling\\_mcdonough@schatz.senate.gov](mailto:aisling_mcdonough@schatz.senate.gov)) for Senator Brian Schatz
- Isaac Loeb ([isaac.loeb@mail.house.gov](mailto:isaac.loeb@mail.house.gov)) for Representative Peter Welch
- Sydney Pettit ([sydney.pettit@mail.house.gov](mailto:sydney.pettit@mail.house.gov)) for Representative David McKinley

- **Endorsements:**

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**Alliance for  
Headache  
Disorders  
Advocacy**

Alliance for Patient Access	Migraine Research Foundation
American Academy of Neurology	Miles for Migraine
American Headache Society	National Headache Foundation
Association of Migraine Disorders	North Central Headache Society
Clusterbusters	Runnin' for Research
Headache Cooperative of New England	Southern Headache Society
Headache Cooperative of the Pacific	

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- **Academy of Integrative Pain Management**
- **Alliance for Balanced Pain Management**
- **American Academy of Pain Medicine**
- **American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation**
- **American Medical Association**
- **American Pain Society**
- **American Society of Anesthesiologists**
- **Chronic Pain Research Alliance**
- **Coalition for Headache and Migraine Patients**
- **Hawaii Society of Anesthesiologists**
- **Headache and Migraine Policy Forum**
- **International Pain Foundation**
- **Migraine World Summit**
- **National Migraine Coalition**
- **National Patient Advocate Foundation**
- **Pain Care Coalition**
- **The Pain Community**
- **The TMJ Association**
- **US Pain Foundation**

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