

# **PATIENT ALERT!**

## **TELL MEMBERS OF CONGRESS TO ATTEND THIS MEETING!**

**Call their local office or the Congressional switchboard at  
(202) 224-3121**

**Or email: [www.house.gov/writerep](http://www.house.gov/writerep)**

### **The Politics of Pain: Drug Policy & Patient Access to Effective Pain Treatments**

**Friday, Sept 17, 2004 121 Cannon HOB  
11 am – 12:30 pm (Light refreshments following presentations)**

#### **Ronald T. Libby, PhD.**

Professor, University of North Florida  
*DEA investigation initiatives & funding sources*

#### **Frank B. Fisher, M.D.,**

Exonerated pain management specialist  
*Myth of available pain treatment*

#### **Rev. Ronald Myers, Sr., M.D.**

Founder, President, American Pain Institute  
*Impact on African-American community  
(See PEOPLE magazine 9/14/04)*

#### **Maia Szalavitz**

Fellow, media watchdog group, STATS  
*Opioid-phobia & media distortion of issue  
(See "Dr. Feelscared" at [www.Reason.com](http://www.Reason.com))*

#### **Eric Sterling**

President, Criminal Justice Policy Found., fmr.  
Cong, staffer who helped write DEA laws  
*Failure of drug policy*

#### **Siobhan Reynolds**

Founder & President, Pain Relief Network  
*Impact on families & economic issues*

More than 48 million people in the U.S. suffer from chronic pain, according to the National Institutes of Health. Recent high-profile news cases of opioid usage such as Rush Limbaugh have placed the issue on the front pages, including a debate over dependency vs. addiction, who is "deserving" and who is "undeserving," of opioid treatment, and whether pain patients should be subjected to different standards of personal scrutiny than other patients.

The DEA claims drug diversion has reached crisis proportions, justifying increased investigative initiatives that frequently circumvent the Congressional appropriations process. Physicians are being prosecuted and imprisoned, and patients sentenced based on pill counts. As a result, physicians are afraid, and pain is going untreated. A bi-partisan amendment sponsored by Reps. Conyers and Paul, M.D., to defund these initiatives failed this session, but is gaining more support.

But efforts by some, including featured panelists, have exposed how news stories have overblown the problem by using faulty statistics and methodology in reporting drug diversion. The Orlando Sentinel recently retracted a series of articles and fired the reporter.

Medical research and treatment has made tremendous advances in pain management, but is public policy keeping up? And is law enforcement discouraging patient access to treatment as a result of prosecution of physicians under the Controlled Substances Act?

This distinguished panel will examine the current state of pain management, law enforcement initiatives, patient experiences, economic impact of untreated pain, funding sources, sentencing guidelines, H.R. 3015 prescription drug database act, and solutions for cooperation between lawmakers, regulators, law enforcement and the medical community.

**RSVP: [briefing@aapsonline.org](mailto:briefing@aapsonline.org) or (800) 635-1196 by 12:00 noon, Wed. Sept 15.**

Briefing & lunch are free of charge



Association of American Physicians & Surgeons

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