60 Plus Association & the Association of American Physicians & Surgeons
invite you to attend...

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

Friday, Sept 17, 2004 121 Cannon Bldg. 1st SE & Independence Washington DC
11 am – 12:30 pm (Refreshments following presentations)

RSVP: briefing @AAPSonline.org or (800) 635-1196 by noon 9/15

- ***Wheelchair-bound Richard Paey, an MS & chronic pain patient serves 25 years for attempts to get painkillers.***
- ***Dr. James Graves is serving 63 years for manslaughter in the deaths of four patients, at least of one of whom mixed painkillers with illegal "recreational" drugs.***
- ***Dr. William Hurwitz faces trial next month on more than 60 charges usually reserved for drug kingpins.***
- ***A Redding, CA couple makes costly treks to Oregon to track down a pain specialist after theirs is prosecuted.***
- ***Dr. Benjamin Moore of Myrtle Beach commits suicide on the eve of his sentencing.***
- ***Dr. Jeri Hassman of Tucson is indicted on more than 100 counts after she refuses to rat out a patient.***

These are not isolated cases. Almost 50 million people in the U.S. suffer from chronic pain, and for many, opioid painkillers provide the only relief. More than 400 doctors were prosecuted for prescribing painkillers in 2002.

The DEA and the DOJ have launched Draconian enforcement initiatives, leaving them to decide who is "deserving" or "undeserving" of pain relief. Doctors are being threatened, impoverished, delicensed, and imprisoned for prescribing in good faith with the intention of relieving pain. The "War on Drugs" has come to mean a war on LEGAL drugs – and against the doctors who prescribe them, and the patients who need them.

Prosecutors make careers out of high-publicity cases involving the hot "drug du jour" such as OxyContin. But this war is causing enormous collateral damage and deaths from "friendly fire." Physicians have been drummed out of practice, sent to jail, and even been driven to suicide in the face of these 21st century witch hunts. Patients are threatened by prosecutors if they refuse to testify against doctors. They're left in debilitating pain, some driven to suicide rather than face the pain.

If this continues, not one doctor will be willing to prescribe the drugs that patients so desperately need.

TOPICS

This subject concerns a myriad of constituents; it's a tax issue, a privacy issue, a minority issue, a senior issue, a drug policy issue, a criminal justice issue. This panel will examine how public policy has lagged behind the tremendous advances in pain management:

Conyers/Paul amendment to de-fund the DEA
Dependency vs. addiction – why Rush Limbaugh is wrong
DEA funding sources circumventing Congressional intent
Why physicians make easy targets rather than drug dealers
The myth of a drug diversion "crisis"
Prescription drug database for everyone
Should law enforcement or doctors define medical necessity
Privacy & civil liberties violation of pain patients
Economic impact of untreated pain
How the news media helped create the problem
How the Controlled Substances Act actually harms patients
Special problems for seniors & end-of-life

SPEAKERS

Rev. Ronald Myers, Sr., MD
Founder, Pres., American Pain Institute
Impact on African-Americans
(See PEOPLE magazine 9/14/04)

Ronald T. Libby, PhD.
Professor, University of North Florida
DEA investigation initiatives & funding

Eric Sterling
President, Criminal Justice Policy Fdn.
Fmr Counsel, House Judiciary Cmte., who helped write DEA laws
Failure of drug policy

Frank B. Fisher, M.D.,
Exonerated pain specialist
Myth of available pain treatment

Maia Szalavitz
Fellow, media watchdog group, STATS
Opioid-phobia & media distortion
(See "Dr. Feelscared" at www.Reason.com)

Siobhan Reynolds
Founder & Pres., Pain Relief Network
Impact on families & economic issues

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