

Canadian Pain Care Forum (CPCF)

U.S. Inspiration

About a decade ago, the US Pain Care Forum held its inaugural meeting to share information and coordinate responses to federal and state initiatives. Starting with handful of patient, medical and industry representatives, this group has grown to encompass 74 national and regional organizations which meets monthly and often attracts key guest leaders/speakers from various agencies of the U.S. administration.

Canadian Context

With the October 2015 election of a new federal government and early indications of the collaborative tone and direction it plans to engage in with Stakeholders, the timing is ideal to establish the Canadian Pain Care Forum (working name) in Q1 of 2016. Many organizations in Canada are devoted in some capacity, directly or in-directly, to the relief of palliative, acute and/or chronic pain or policy efforts in this area. These organizations face similar challenges such as:

- 1) Putting “pain” on the public policy (national, provincial or local) radar to effect policy discussion(s) and positive policy/legislative/regulatory change;
- 2) Educating policy makers and the general public on the pervasiveness of “pain” in Canada and its inherent personal, healthcare and societal costs (estimated at \$60B annually); and
- 3) Balancing discussion (policy, media and societal) on major public health issues such as the crisis of prescription drug abuse, misuse and diversion in the context of the continuing need of access to the responsible treatment of pain across a breadth of diseases and health conditions.

These organizations include non-profit patient/consumer education and advocacy organizations, healthcare professional(s) associations, policy organizations, medical services organizations, academic health-science centres, law enforcement, addiction and treatment, and the pharmaceutical and medical products businesses.

Recent and historic efforts on engaging policy makers around the issue of “pain” have tended to be independent and isolated without the advantage of sustained national coordination and resourcing. Moreover, the various actors enumerated above, often operate with different sets of information (political and data sources), the aggregation of which would provide a significant advantage of intelligence needed for effective planning and action to better address the three challenges identified above.

Proposal

To address this fragmentation of knowledge and effort, a Canadian Pain Care Forum (CPCF) should be established to:

- 1) Provide a quarterly forum for the exchange of information and ideas to further the general education of members regarding public policy issues surrounding the treatment of pain.
- 2) Provide a forum to coordinate and focus commitments to action – all voluntary – regarding the broad range public policy issues that can and do affect the treatment of pain.

Participation in the CPCF would be open to all organizations with demonstrated interest in and desire to improve national and/or provincial pain care public policy – respectful debate/differing positions welcome. The CPCF would be committed to improve the understanding and knowledge of member organizations and to promote coordinated actions on common interest public policy issues. However, the CPCF would take no official positions on issues: these would be taken by individual organizations as they see fit.

At the inaugural or subsequent meeting(s), a meetings “moderator” or “moderator process” would be selected/established to ensure fair, balanced and inclusive agendas.