

**Joint CPA-APTA Statement: North American Collaboration to Address Opioid Epidemic
January 25, 2017**

The American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) and Canadian Physiotherapy Association (CPA) announce a shared commitment to helping Americans and Canadians find healthier ways to manage pain and reduce the use of prescription pain medications. This commitment builds on current public and private sector initiatives to address the epidemic of opioid abuse, and the tragic impact it has on society, families, and individuals.

Management of pain associated with common musculoskeletal conditions such as low back pain is among the most common reasons North Americans access the health care system. Unfortunately, prescription drugs such as opioids are too often relied upon as the primary (and sometimes only) strategy to manage pain. This has led in part to a cycle of overuse and abuse of pain medications, followed by addiction, with significant personal and societal costs. Conversely, nonpharmacologic interventions that have been shown to be equally or more effective than opioids in the management of acute and chronic musculoskeletal pain—without the risk of addiction—are underutilized. Our associations and members stand ready to assist in addressing this issue as a priority in 2017 and beyond.

Our collective commitment is based on our responsibility to advance public health by ensuring people have access to the best available, evidenced-based pain management strategies and interventions. Therefore, we declare a commitment to the following initiatives:

- Establish and support multidisciplinary collaboration among health disciplines, payers of health care services, etc, in research designed to investigate the clinical and cost effectiveness of nonpharmacologic approaches to pain management, and promote the findings of such efforts;
- Collaborate to create, distribute, and implement practice guidance and evidence-based advisories on pain management;
- Develop innovative pain-management clinical practice models marked by collaboration with mental health professionals, primary care providers, emergency and urgent care physicians, and other health care specialists;
- Promote exercise-focused interventions for effective pain management; and
- Educate the public on alternative safe and cost-effective pain-management interventions using public service announcements, social media campaigns, and media outreach.

Our commitment as national associations is to put the health of our patients first. We will partner with physicians, policymakers, payers, and the public to create and achieve collective solutions designed to effectively and safely manage pain, and create healthier communities. We will work together to improve the health and wellbeing of Canadians and Americans suffering from pain.

Sincerely,



Sharon Dunn, PT, PhD
President, APTA



Linda Woodhouse, PT, PhD
President, CPA