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## **LEGISLATIVE GUIDELINES FOR EVALUATING LEGISLATION ON PAIN**

Chronic and acute pain is a major health problem and an important component of much of neurological illness. The American Academy of Neurology, representing 17,000 neurologists and neuroscientists, believes that the problems presented by pain deserve national action. The Academy supports palliative care for incurable and progressively ill patients as good medical practice.

The Academy believes that health practitioners, the public and payors should be better educated about acute and chronic pain. Medical research needs to be expanded in this area. Appropriate practice guides should be developed for use by payors and practitioners.

The Academy therefore supports federal pain legislation, which meets these criteria:

- Legislation should be enacted which expands medical research, both basic and clinical, on acute and chronic pain. Such research should focus among other things, on safer and more effective ways to provide control of pain for patients.
- Legislation should encourage education of the public, practitioners and payors about pain and analgesic pharmacology and treatment. It should ensure coverage by all payors of the diagnosis and treatment of pain, both acute and chronic.
- Legislation should not limit the autonomy of physicians to properly treat pain through limitations placed on medically necessary therapies. The Academy supports the 1998 guidelines of the Federation of State Medical Boards on the use of controlled substances with respect to pain management and encourages governmental bodies with authority in this area to follow these guidelines. New federal legislation in the management of controlled substances is unnecessary.

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