

Thirty Attorneys General Speak Out On Pain Management!

**To: The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)
From: The National Association of Attorneys General**

January 19, 2005

We, the undersigned Attorneys General, write to express our concern about recent DEA actions with respect to prescription pain medication policy and to request a joint meeting with you...

The National Association of Attorneys General in 2003 adopted a Resolution Calling for a Balanced Approach to Promoting Pain Relief and Preventing Abuse of Pain Medications. Both these documents reflected a consensus among law enforcement agencies, health care practitioners, and patient advocates that the prevention of drug abuse is an important societal goal that can and should be pursued without hindering proper patient care. The [DEA Pain Guidelines] issued in 2004 appeared to be consistent with these principles, so we were surprised when they were withdrawn. The Interim Policy published on November 16, 2004 emphasizes enforcement, and seems likely to have a chilling effect on physicians engaged in the legitimate practice of medicine...

We have learned that adequate pain management is often difficult to obtain because many physicians fear investigations and enforcement actions if they prescribe adequate levels of opioids or have many patients with prescriptions for pain medications. We are working to address these concerns while ensuring that individuals who do divert or abuse drugs are prosecuted...

We hope that together we can find ways to prevent abuse and diversion without infringing on the legitimate practice of medicine or exerting a chilling effect on the willingness of physicians to treat patients who are in pain... We hope to meet with you soon.

Sincerely,

Attorneys General of:

Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Connecticut, District of Columbia, Georgia, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont, West Virginia

www.CommonSenseDrugPolicy.org, www.DrugWarFacts.org

Mike Gray, Chair; Robert Field, Co-Chair

See the full letter at www.csdp.org/naagletter.htm