



## National Survey of Public Attitudes Toward Balanced Pain Management

An attitudinal survey of more than 300 patients, health care providers, caregivers and advocates from across the country revealed broad public support for the tenets of balanced pain management. The approach delivers integrative care through an individualized combination of pharmacologic and non-pharmacologic treatments.

Responses to the survey, conducted online from May to June 2018, shaped a clear narrative: **Stakeholders favor greater access to a range of treatment options for pain but see health plan designs putting an integrative approach out of reach.**

### Key Findings

#### Approach to Pain Management

A balanced approach to pain management allows a physician and patient to determine the best course of treatment. For acute pain, physicians may start with less aggressive, non-opioid therapies and scale up as necessary. For chronic pain, physicians may prescribe medication and/or recommend non-pharmacologic interventions such as physical therapy or talk therapy.



80%

**Pain is undertreated.**

85%

**Physicians should determine** course of treatment.

73%

Acute pain is **best treated through a scaled approach.**

88%

Effective pain management **addresses related conditions** like depression and anxiety.

## Opioids

For some patients, opioids remain an effective and appropriate pain treatment. In those cases, responsible use of prescription opioids that are abuse deterrent can minimize the risk and potential impact on household and family members. The decision of whether and when to use opioids should rest with a patient and his or her physician however. Patients should not be compelled to manage their pain with opioids simply because their health plan does not provide adequate coverage for other treatment options.



60%

**Limited coverage for integrative care** forces patients to use opioids to manage pain.

62%

**Abuse-deterrent opioids** play a role in curbing the opioid crisis.

50%  
*/plurality*

**Overreliance on an opioid-only approach** to pain has exacerbated the nation's abuse & addiction problem.

## Access

Restrictive formularies, burdensome prior authorization processes and high co-pays can keep balanced pain management out of patients' reach. Integrative solutions and technology-based treatments can aid patients in managing pain and avoiding unnecessary opioid exposure. But for patients to reap the benefits, their health plans must provide adequate coverage.



66%

Hospital formularies **should accommodate multimodal analgesia**.

84%

Health plans **should adequately cover related treatments** like chiropractic, physical therapy and talk therapy.

74%

Health plans **should cover technology-based treatments and devices** for short- and long-term pain.

71%

Prior authorization **unnecessarily blocks access** to abuse-deterrent opioids.

74%

Health plans **don't provide adequate coverage** for integrative pain care.



## Survey Demographic Breakdown



Male (9%)  
Female (91%)

21-35 (4%)  
36-49 (8%)  
50-64 (46%)  
Over 65 (42%)

Health care provider (8%)  
Pain patient (72%)  
Caregiver or advocate (5%)  
Other (15%)

Northeast (26%)  
Midwest (26%)  
South (24%)  
West (24%)



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