



The Susan G. Komen
Breast Cancer Foundation

LIVESTRONG™
LANCE ARMSTRONG FOUNDATION



Pain & Policy Studies Group

University of Wisconsin Comprehensive Cancer Center

World Health Organization Collaborating Center
for Policy and Communications in Cancer Care

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

September 27, 2006

CONTACT:

Jean Maza, 972-701-2105, jmaza@komen.org

Jennifer Long, 512-279-8391, jennifer.long@laf.org

Steven Weiss, 202-661-5711, steve.weiss@cancer.org

Aaron Gilson, Ph.D., 608-263-8448, amgilson@wisc.edu

States Improve Pain Policies, But Barriers Remain to Effective Pain Management for Cancer and Other Chronic Diseases

New Report Evaluates States' Progress in Improving Pain Care

WASHINGTON, DC – States are making steady progress in adopting effective policies that help people with pain to alleviate their suffering, according to a newly released national report card. However, there are still states with policies that prevent healthcare professionals from effectively alleviating the suffering of their patients.

The report, *Achieving Balance in State Pain Policy: A Progress Report Card (Second Edition)*, was prepared by the University of Wisconsin Pain & Policy Studies Group (PPSG) and jointly funded by the nation's leading information and advocacy groups for people with cancer: the American Cancer Society, the Lance Armstrong Foundation (LAF) and the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation.

PPSG researchers evaluated whether state pain policies and regulations enhance or impede pain management. In the report, each state is assigned a grade from 'A' to 'F' that reflects the effectiveness of its pain policy. PPSG also evaluated policies in place in 2000 and 2003 to determine what changes have been made over time. Results show continued momentum for positive policy change over the six-year evaluation period:

- Two states (Michigan and Virginia) received an 'A' grade, which no state received in 2003.
- 82 percent of states have a grade above 'C,' up from 49 percent that received a 'C' in 2000 and 67 percent in 2003.
- No state's grade decreased between 2000 and 2006.
- 19 states saw their grades improve from 2003.

"We're seeing positive results because healthcare regulators have adopted policies encouraging pain management, palliative care, and end-of-life care," said Aaron Gilson, Ph.D., associate director of US policy research of the PPSG. "Additionally, many state legislatures have repealed restrictive or ambiguous policy language that has prevented healthcare professionals from aggressively treating pain."

"Despite this progress, most states still face the challenge of removing their remaining policy barriers, communicating the new or revised policies to healthcare practitioners and ensuring that the spirit of these policies are put into practice."

"The results of PPSG's research show a very encouraging improvement in state pain policies, but more needs to be done to effectively address the national health crisis of undertreated pain," said John R. Seffrin, Ph.D., CEO of the American Cancer Society. "States must effectively inform the medical community about improved pain policies so people with pain can benefit from them. Patients, health organizations, healthcare professionals, regulatory officials, licensing boards, and policymakers all have a role to play to promote a balanced approach to pain control policy and practice."

“Cancer survivors deserve to have their pain managed effectively so that they can focus on living life on their own terms,” said Mitch Stoller, president and chief executive officer of the LAF. “We must ensure that policies are in place to help people obtain medical care to promote the highest quality of life possible. We know that many states still have work to do to remove barriers to effective pain management, and we are proud to join in that critical work.”

“Effective treatment of pain is a key element in ensuring a good quality of life for cancer patients and other people faced with life-threatening illness. We are committed to making sure remaining barriers to effective pain management are removed and that health care workers are adequately informed of recent policy changes that can positively impact the lives of their patients,” said Hala Modellmog, president and CEO of the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation.

Balanced Policies Necessary

For years, many states have had restrictive or ambiguous policies that could create barriers to the effective treatment of pain. An estimated 100 million Americans who are affected by chronic diseases and conditions suffer from pain. Untreated pain can devastate a person’s quality of life, affecting all aspects of daily functioning, including sleep, work, and relationships.

While there are several effective medications and non-drug therapies available for pain treatment, opioid pain medications are often the best treatment for managing serious, persistent pain. But health professionals can be reluctant to prescribe such medications because of the risk of violating laws aimed at preventing trafficking and abuse of controlled substances.

“Because state and federal policies can either enhance or interfere with pain management, it is important that such policies are balanced to ensure that prescription pain medications are available to patients who need them while at the same time preventing illegal trafficking and non-medical use of opioids,” Dr. Gilson said.

Additional details about the report findings and pain as a public health problem are attached. This project was made possible through joint funding provided by the American Cancer Society, the Lance Armstrong Foundation and the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation.

The complete reports, *Achieving Balance in State Pain Policy: A Progress Report Card (Second Edition)* and accompanying *Achieving Balance in Federal and State Pain Policy: A Guide to Evaluation (Third Edition)* are available at the University of Wisconsin’s Pain and Policy Studies Group website: http://www.painpolicy.wisc.edu/Achieving_Balance/index.html

About the American Cancer Society

The American Cancer Society is dedicated to eliminating cancer as a major health problem by saving lives, diminishing suffering and preventing cancer through research, education, advocacy and service. Founded in 1913 and with national headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia, the Society has 13 regional Divisions and local offices in 3,400 communities, involving millions of volunteers across America. For more information anytime, call toll free 1-800-ACS-2345 or visit www.cancer.org.

About the Lance Armstrong Foundation

The Lance Armstrong Foundation (LAF) inspires and empowers people affected by cancer. We help people with cancer focus on living; we believe that unity is strength, knowledge is power and attitude is everything. From the moment of diagnosis, the LAF provides the practical information and tools people with cancer need to live life on their own terms. The LAF serves its mission through advocacy, public health and research. Founded in 1997 by cancer survivor and champion cyclist Lance Armstrong, the LAF is located in Austin, Texas. For more information, visit www.livestrong.org.

About the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation

The Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation was established in 1982 by Nancy Brinker to honor the memory of her sister, Susan G. Komen, who died from breast cancer at the age of 36. Today, the

Foundation is an international organization with a network of more than 75,000 volunteers working through local Affiliates and events like the Komen Race for the Cure® to eradicate breast cancer as a life-threatening disease. A global leader in the fight against breast cancer, the Foundation fulfills its mission through support of innovative breast cancer research grants, meritorious awards and educational, scientific and community outreach programs around the world. Through fiscal year 2005, the Komen Foundation, together with its Affiliate Network, corporate partners and generous donors, has invested \$630 million in breast cancer research, education, screening and treatment programs. For questions about breast health or breast cancer, visit the Komen Foundation's Web site at www.komen.org or call the Komen Foundation's National Toll-Free Breast Care Helpline at 1.800 I'M AWARE® (1.800.462.9273).

###