



Global Healthy Living Foundation
515 North Midland Avenue
Upper Nyack, New York 10960 USA
+1 845 348 0400
+1 845 340 0210 fax
www.ghlf.org

April 11th, 2022

Rochelle Walensky, MD, MPH
Director
Center for Disease Control and Prevention
4770 Buford Highway NE, MS S106-9
Atlanta, GA 30341

Re: Proposed 2022 CDC Clinical Practice Guideline for Prescribing Opioids (CDC-2022-0024)

Submitted electronically via regulations.gov

Dear Director Walensky,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft guidance Proposed 2022 CDC Clinical Practice Guideline for Prescribing Opioids (CDC-2022-0024).

The Global Healthy Living Foundation (GHLF) is a 23-year-old 501(c)(3) patient organization reaching millions of chronically ill patients and their caregivers across the country through social media, community events, and our online support and education. GHLF works to improve the quality of life for patients living with chronic diseases by making sure their voices are heard and advocating for improved access to care at the community level. Our patients suffer from chronic conditions including arthritis, psoriasis, gastrointestinal disease, cardiovascular disease, and migraine. Many of those in our community deal with debilitating pain and opioid medications are a necessary part of their treatment regimes. Considering that this class of drugs has such a significant impact on patients with legitimate pain and our society, we greatly appreciate the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC's) efforts to provide guidance on the prescribing practices of opioid medications to prove their value without adding to the stigma of their use.

Chronic pain is a real public health problem that is nothing short of debilitating for those going through it. Individuals suffering in pain simply cannot go to work, have difficulty being present for their families, and often have difficulty simply interacting with society. We support the appropriate use of opioids to manage this pain and allow patients to live out their daily lives as close to normal as possible. This guidance will help patients within our community suffering from legitimate pain have access to both safe and effective medications to help them live fuller, more productive lives.

The opioid crisis is real. We are at a point where few Americans do not know of someone who has suffered as a result of addiction. In representing patients who suffer daily in physical pain, we promote alternative pain management techniques vigorously: where viable, we encourage our patients to try physical therapy, acupuncture, and yoga/stretching. Additionally, we support the research and development of non-opioid pain medications because we believe that opioids should never be used in this first instance for chronic pain. If patients find themselves needing an opioid medication, then it should be used only under the strictest guidance from physicians. Because of the significant consequences of opioid use, we greatly appreciate that the CDC has continued to study and issue guidance on their use, without looking to move beyond them entirely.

The CDC has made tremendous improvements to better incorporate the perspective of patients into their activities and we would like to encourage the CDC to continue to have this focus by emphasizing the importance of the patient voice when considering these types of guidance documents. As relayed above, patients with legitimate pain have a valuable perspective to share. GHLF seeks to minimize the stigma associated with their desire to appropriately manage their pain. Allowing them to have a voice in this conversation will help ensure that the public emphasizes the need for pain-alleviating medications and for medications and strategies that will minimize patient-specific and public impacts of these drugs.

As the CDC understands, pain is a subjective experience that can be difficult to measure. Therefore, we encourage the CDC to accept all types of data to better understand the safety and effectiveness of opioid medications including patient-reported outcomes and other real-world data. Giving a voice to patients has been a primary driving force behind GHLF's activities since its founding. As such, we are proud to be able to offer patients the option to participate in ArthritisPower, an application used to collect patient-reported outcomes. Disease-specific registries and patient-reported data collected by non-profit organizations like ours have served as valuable tools in other government efforts associated with the incorporation of the patient perspective into the discovery, development, and delivery lifecycle of a medical product. As an example, the National Patient-Centered Clinical Research Network (PCORnet) is aimed at incorporating the experiences and concerns of patients through standardized measures and instruments and we are honored to contribute to this important initiative through our own Patient-Powered Research Network (PPRN), ArthritisPower with more than 35,000 patients. We urge the CDC to update the guidance to note the importance of patient-reported outcomes, other types of real-world data, and patient registries in general.

Thank you for considering our comments and for your efforts on this important guidance. Please contact me at snewmark@ghlf.org if we may be of further assistance or if you have questions on our comments.

Sincerely,



Steven Newmark
Director of Policy and General Counsel
Global Healthy Living Foundation

