



AMERICAN ACADEMY OF
ORTHOPAEDIC SURGEONS

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March 28, 2016

The Honorable Alex Mooney
United States House of Representatives
1232 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Mooney,

On behalf of over 18,000 board-certified orthopaedic surgeons, the American Association of Orthopaedic Surgeons (AAOS) would like to commend you for introducing H.R. 4499, the Promoting Responsible Opioid Prescribing Act of 2016.

The United States is in the midst of an epidemic of opioid drug use, misuse, and abuse. The AAOS believes that, in order to fix this problem, a comprehensive opioid program must be initiated, with input and assistance from all stakeholders, including physicians and other prescribers. For these reasons, the AAOS has been working on a number of initiatives to limit the number of opioids on the market and to encourage its members to practice safe and effective pain management and treatment.

The assumption that quality care can only be achieved if patients do not report having any pain reflects a significant problem in American culture regarding pain management. Clinically, there is no proven reason why pain needs to be eliminated entirely. In fact, certain levels of pain can be a sign of healing. When physicians prescribe a treatment plan for their patients, they need to be able to use their medical expertise in evaluating and monitoring the patients' pain without outside factors such as federal law or regulations imposing unnecessary pressure.

H.R. 4499 looks to address this issue by removing certain pain-related issues from the Hospital Consumer Survey of Healthcare Providers and Systems (HCAHPS), which factors into payment calculations. This would allow physicians more freedom to make the best clinical decisions for their patients in terms of pain management.

Again, the AAOS commends the efforts put forth in this legislation to provide a much needed change in the pain-related measures included in the Medicare value-based payment calculations. Please feel free to contact Catherine Boudreaux, AAOS Senior Manager of Government Relations (boudreaux@aaos.org), if you have any questions or if the AAOS can serve as a resource to you.

Sincerely,

Gerald R. Williams Jr., MD
President
American Association of Orthopaedic Surgeons