

Author Full Name : Judith Gibson-Combs**Received Date :** 01/11/2025 02:46 PM**Comments Received :**

I am writing to express my interest in the CDC's efforts to review the impact of its pain management guidelines on patients, caregivers, healthcare providers, and the practice of pain medicine. This initiative is crucial for ensuring that public health policies are evidence-based, compassionate, and inclusive of diverse patient needs.

Since the introduction of the CDC guidelines on opioid prescribing, there have been widespread discussions about their intended and unintended consequences. While the guidelines aimed to address the opioid crisis, many patients with chronic pain and their caregivers have expressed concerns about limited access to appropriate pain management. Similarly, healthcare providers, including pain specialists and primary care doctors, have faced challenges in balancing guideline compliance with the ethical imperative to provide individualized care.

I urge the CDC to consider the following points in its review:

1. **Patient-Centered Outcomes:** Evaluate how the guidelines have impacted patients' quality of life, mental health, and functional ability. Pay special attention to populations with chronic, non-cancer pain conditions.
2. **Provider Perspectives:** Gather insights from healthcare providers about barriers to implementing the guidelines, including fear of regulatory scrutiny, inadequate education on pain management, and limited access to non-opioid treatments.
3. **Caregiver Experiences:** Include the voices of caregivers who often bear the burden of managing the complexities of chronic pain in their loved ones.
4. **Practice of Pain Medicine:** Assess how the guidelines have influenced the practice of pain specialists and the availability of multimodal treatment options, such as physical therapy, behavioral health services, and interventional procedures.
5. **Flexibility in Guidelines:** Emphasize the importance of individualized care, allowing clinicians to exercise clinical judgment when determining the best treatment for their patients.
6. **Measuring the harm from 2016 Guidelines before measuring implementation of the 2022 Guidelines.** How can you see how it was fixed unless they measure how badly they broke it?

The review process presents an opportunity to refine and enhance the guidelines to better serve all stakeholders. By incorporating comprehensive feedback from patients, caregivers, and providers, the CDC can create a framework that promotes safe, effective, and compassionate pain management while addressing the public health concerns of opioid misuse and addiction.