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Capps, Rogers Introduce Legislation To Help Americans Suffering From Pain

Bill Would Improve the Assessment and Treatment of Pain

WASHINGTON, D.C. –Today Congresswoman Lois Capps (D-CA) and Congressman Mike Rogers (R-MI) introduced the National Pain Care Policy Act of 2007, legislation to improve pain care research, education, training, access, outreach and care.

“I am pleased to join my colleague Congressman Rogers and over one hundred organizations representing the pain care community in supporting this legislation that will help millions of Americans suffering from pain,” said Capps. “Pain is the leading cause of disability in the United States and is straining our health care system. Fortunately we don’t have to remain debilitated by pain. This legislation takes several important steps to improve the assessment, understanding, and treatment of pain. Hopefully this will provide much needed relief for many people suffering from pain.”

“Pain keeps sufferers from their family, work and the community, and in many cases it is so severe it can be life threatening,” Rogers said. “Pain is linked to such diseases as cancer, diabetes, arthritis, HIV-AIDS, and hundreds of other illnesses. Back pain alone affects more than 70 percent of all Americans at some time in their lives, with the cost for medical services topping \$26 billion annually. The need for education, access and research regarding chronic pain care has long been at the crisis stage and we need to move forward with finding solutions.”

The National Pain Care Policy Act of 2007 would combat pain in four ways: by authorizing an Institute of Medicine Conference on Pain Care; authorizing a Pain Consortium at the National Institutes of Health; providing comprehensive pain care education and training for health care professionals; and by instituting a public awareness campaign on pain management.

Over one hundred leading organizations representing the pain care community have joined Congresswoman Capps and Congressman Rogers in support of this legislation, including the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network and the American Pain Foundation and a coalition of leading professional organizations in the pain field.

“For many cancer patients, fear of cancer pain is worse than fear of death itself,” said Daniel E. Smith, president of the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN). “The good news is that nearly all cancer pain can be relieved if treated adequately. This legislation will address significant pain management barriers such as, lack of physician training, patient awareness and treatment disparities based on gender, age and race.”

“At the American Pain Foundation, we believe that access to appropriate, timely and unbiased pain care is a fundamental right. For a number of reasons, these rights are sadly unrealized for millions of Americans in pain,” said Will Rowe, executive director of the American Pain Foundation. “By increasing research, education and awareness of pain issues, the National Pain Care Policy Act takes important steps toward making these rights a reality.”

Congresswoman Capps, a registered nurse, serves on the Energy and Commerce Committee’s Subcommittee on Health.

Congressman Rogers serves on the Energy and Commerce Committee’s Subcommittee on Health.

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