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**For Grace Spearheads Chronic Pain Educational Briefing at the California Capitol**  
“How to Better the Lives of Californians Impacted by Chronic Pain”

*The August 14<sup>th</sup> briefing will bring together legislators, staffers and state health agency leaders in an effort to place chronic pain and its treatment front and center on the policy stage*

LOS ANGELES (July 15, 2019) – For Grace will host an educational briefing on Wednesday, August 14<sup>th</sup> from 10am- Noon, Room 113, at the State Capitol in downtown Sacramento.

*For briefing details, please visit [forgrace.org](http://forgrace.org).*

For Grace's educational briefing about chronic pain and its care aims to convene California legislators, staffers and health care agency leaders. The briefing's goal is to educate those in attendance about chronic pain as a major public health concern, the merits of the National Institutes of Health's National Pain Strategy, the value of comprehensive integrative medicine and a drug-free pain management model that will lessen the burden of prescription opioid use.

The desired outcome of the briefing is to spark a California-specific pain strategy that will implement a model for improved care for the six to 12 million Californians impacted by chronic pain. The National Pain Strategy provides an excellent blueprint for optimal pain care and by teaming with state legislators and health agency leaders For Grace will move forward legislatively with our key recommendation – **a Pain Center administered under the state's Health and Human Services agency.**

*The Pain Center will implement the following:*

- 1) establish a network of Comprehensive Integrative Pain Treatment and Research Centers of Excellence across the state,
- 2) improve and expand pain management education/training opportunities for all types of health care providers (and students),
- 3) work with state agencies responsible for state employee health insurance, Medi-Cal coverage and Worker's Compensation to revise coverage and reimbursement policies for chronic pain &
- 4) develop and implement a state-wide public health campaign to educate California residents about chronic pain and chronic pain patients about pain treatment options including self-care

As background to the briefing, in 2010 the National Academy of Sciences (formerly known as the Institute of Medicine) called for “a cultural transformation in pain prevention, care, education, and research.” In response to this call to action experts from the public and private sectors, including healthcare professionals, payers, advocates, and patients came together and developed the National Pain Strategy (April 2016) which has been described as “a roadmap toward achieving a system of care in which all people receive appropriate, high quality and evidence-based care for pain.”

For Grace's November 2018 Pain Summit responded to that call to action by focusing on developing concrete strategies in four of the six key areas identified by the NPS: Prevention and Care, Disparities, Service Delivery and Payment, and Medical Education. The summit healthcare luminaries responded with proposed solutions that lead to the development of the Pain Center recommendation.

"In this post-opioid climate, it's more urgent than ever to find alternative treatments to pain care", says For Grace Founder and Spokesperson, Cynthia Toussaint. She adds, "The public and medical establishment are still woefully unaware that chronic pain is a devastating disease, one that destroys many of our families, often leaves us in financial ruin with permanent disability, isolation, anxiety and depression. The Pain Center, under the direction of the California Health and Human Services agency, is the answer. Our Sacramento briefing will lead to its implementation in California, the biggest state in the union, and be a model for the rest of the country."

According to the groundbreaking 2011 report by the Institute of Medicine, more than 100 million people in the United States suffer from chronic pain (25 million with the "high-impact" variety which produces significant disability and loss of quality of life) along with inadequate care.

The two-hour briefing will kick-off at 10am on August 14<sup>th</sup> in Room 113. After a welcome from key legislative partner **Senator Hannah-Beth Jackson**, a presentation providing a comprehensive overview of chronic pain, the National Pain Strategy and an assessment of current pain management will be given by **Dr. Sean Mackey**, Chief of Division Pain Management, Stanford University.

Following that, **Cynthia Toussaint** will provide a perspective on the stigma associated with being a pain patient and barriers to accessing quality pain management. The second hour of the briefing will be highlighted by a panel discussion about the reasons behind inadequate pain treatment. This distinguished panel of pain experts will be led by **Christin Veasley**, Director of the Chronic Pain Research Alliance, **Dr. Steven Richeimer**, Chief of Pain Medicine, University of Southern California, **Dr. Fasih Hameed**, Associate Medical Director, Petaluma Health Center and **Diane Hoffmann**, Director, Law and Health Care Program, University Of Maryland School of Law.

To close the briefing, Christin Veasley will provide a detailed overview of our California Pain Center recommendation followed by a Q&A session.

Also featured during the day will be an award-winning art gallery by woman in pain **Radene Marie Cook** that will provide insight into the real-life, day-to-day challenges of high-impact chronic pain.

#### **About For Grace**

Founded in 2002, For Grace is an internationally recognized nonprofit organization that promotes care and wellness for women in pain. For Grace has educated, supported and empowered thousands of women in pain through the use of public advocacy, legislative outreach, and mass media. For more information, please visit [forgrace.org](http://forgrace.org).

Reporters seeking to attend and/or cover the briefing are advised to contact For Grace Director John Garrett at 818.760.7635 or [forgracewip@yahoo.com](mailto:forgracewip@yahoo.com)