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## **MDCH Launches New Pain And Symptom Management Website**

A new Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) web site will help Michigan residents address the issues of pain and symptom management, state officials said today.

The MDCH *Pain and Symptom Management* website – available online at [www.michigan.gov/painmanagement](http://www.michigan.gov/painmanagement) or [www.michigan.gov/pm](http://www.michigan.gov/pm) - broadly covers both pain and symptom management at all stages of life, said Janet Olszewski, MDCH Director.

“Launching this website dedicated to informing both health consumers and health care professionals on pain and symptom management is another example of Michigan’s efforts to address this important issue,” Olszewski said.

Development of this site is a direct result of a recommendation identified in Michigan’s Advisory Committee on Pain and Symptom Management 2002 Report to the Governor.

Last fall, the University of Wisconsin Pain and Policies Study Group gave Michigan and one other state an “A” grade due to the state’s progress in balancing proactive pain management policies with measures to prevent abuse and misuse of pain medication.

The *Pain and Symptom Management* web site has a public section with information regarding diseases and conditions that cause pain, medications for treating pain, and tools to search for a local doctor or psychologist that specializes in pain management. This consumer portion of the website provides information on a wide array of pain management issues, including chronic disease pain management, palliative and end of life care, advanced directives and living wills. Numerous links to other websites, articles, and current news regarding pain management are also provided.

The American Academy of Pain Medicine estimates that more than 75 million Americans live with serious pain across all stages of life, and many report that their pain is not managed adequately.

In Michigan, one in five adults report experiencing some form of chronic pain, with 40 percent of people with chronic pain reporting that pain affects their ability to live a normal life. The experience of chronic pain generally increases with age, as revealed by 48 percent of Michigan’s nursing home residents who report experiencing persistent pain. Although studies show that many people are not adequately treated for pain at the end of life, clinicians currently have medications and other treatments to safely provide adequate pain relief for more than 90 percent of these patients.

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“This informative site will help many Michigan citizens understand their rights to safe and effective pain management, and help educate clinicians about the importance of adequately treating pain,” said Dr. Gregory Holzman, State Chief Medicaid Executive. “It also assists our public health efforts to deal with a host of health care concerns, such as the Michigan Cancer Consortium’s efforts to address the palliative care issues of cancer patients.”

In addition to the consumer section, the site also has a section for health care professionals, which provides information related to the importance of treating pain across the patient’s life span. Professionals are able to acquire information on pain and symptom management from this website related to state and national treatment guidelines, Michigan legislation, professional publications and articles, and important links to other pain management websites.

"The Michigan hospice community applauds the efforts of the state in assembling this excellent cadre of resources for the public. We also applaud the state for its proactive stance and aligning their pain policies with the practices of our healthcare professionals," said Jeff Towns, President of the Michigan Hospice & Palliative Care Organization.

In addition to tracking the progress of our state in addressing pain and symptom management, another section of the site contains information about the meetings and activities of the Advisory Committee on Pain and Symptom Management. This body was established in 1998 by the Governor in order to broaden our state’s effort to address pain management following the End of Life Commission’s work regarding pain and symptom management during the early 1990s.

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