

## Media Advisory / Interview Opportunity

### Ontario announces plan to monitor prescription drugs

*Prescription drug misuse is only a symptom of a larger issue – national pain strategy needed*

**Toronto, ON – September 15, 2010** – The Canadian Pain Society (CPS) applauds the Ontario government's announcement today surrounding the creation of an online prescription monitoring program as part of their Narcotics Strategy - as long as it does not punish people with pain. While it is evident that a growing prescription drug misuse problem exists in Ontario and steps must be taken to combat this issue, it is also important to recognize that the misuse of prescription pain medication is only one symptom of a much larger issue. With six million Canadians suffering from poorly treated pain, health care providers and researchers in the field of pain management are calling for our governments to recognize the rights of people to access appropriate, best-practice, pain treatment.

"The Ontario government's proposed online resource may become an effective tool to monitor misuse of prescription pain medication by a small percentage of the population. However, millions of Ontarians live in unnecessary pain and are still being ignored and neglected. We must improve public understanding surrounding one of the most underserved areas of modern medicine and rally the community and government to acknowledge the need for not only a prescription monitoring plan, but also for a longer term strategy for pain management in the province and throughout Canada," said Dr. Roman Jovey, an Ontario based pain treatment and addiction expert and a past president of the CPS.

Chronic pain is among the most disabling and costly afflictions in North America.<sup>1</sup> Estimates place direct health care costs for Canada at more than \$6 billion per year for individuals suffering from chronic pain - By 2025, with the aging of our population, these costs can be expected to rise to \$10.29 billion per year.<sup>2</sup>

"One in five Canadians suffer from daily pain that is often unmanageable. It is critical that we increase public awareness of pain education and treatment to ensure those who experience legitimate pain are receiving the care and quality of life they deserve," says Lynn Cooper, president of the Canadian Pain Coalition (CPC).

"The proposed *Narcotics Safety and Awareness Act* is a step in the right direction. However, there lies a strong need for adequate research, better education for all health care professionals and adequate provisions of evidence-based treatments for pain. These issues can only be addressed with the development and implementation of a national pain strategy," said Dr. Mary Lynch, president of the CPS.

#### **Interview opportunities:**

Pain experts Dr. Mary Lynch and Dr. Roman Jovey are available to comment on Ontario's plan to monitor prescription drugs and discuss their vision surrounding the importance of a national pain strategy in Canada. Lynn Cooper, an Ontario pain sufferer and President of the Canadian Pain Coalition, is also available for comment.

#### **About the Canadian Pain Society (CPS):**

The Canadian Pain Society has been a chapter of the International Association for the Study of Pain since 1982. The aim of the CPS is to foster and encourage research on pain mechanisms and pain syndromes and to help improve the management of patients with acute and chronic pain by bringing together the basic scientists and health professionals of various disciplines and backgrounds who have an interest in pain research and management. [www.canadianpainsociety.ca](http://www.canadianpainsociety.ca)

#### **About the Canadian Pain Coalition:**

The Canadian Pain Coalition (CPC) is *THE National Voice of People with Pain*. Incorporated in 2004

promotes sustained improvement in the understanding, prevention, treatment and management of all types of pain in Canada. CPC accomplishes this through pain education, awareness activities and advocacy initiatives. CPC obtained the Senate Declaration of National Pain Awareness Week in 2004.

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**For further information or to schedule an interview:**

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References

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<sup>1</sup> Pain Clinical Updates: International Association for the Study of Pain. Volume XI, NO. 2 June 2003.

<sup>2</sup> The economics of Chronic Pain. CJ Phillips D Schopflocher (2008). In S Rashiq D Schopflocher, P Taenzer E Jonsson (Eds) Chronic Pain: A Health Policy Perspective. Weinham, Germany: Wiley-Blackwell.