



# Families for *Intractable* Pain Relief

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Welcome to the Families for Intractable Pain Relief newsletter! In case you missed our inaugural edition, you can find it here: <http://familiesforiprelief.com/advocacy/>.

## The Misuse of the Term “Opioid Use Disorder”: Intentional Harm or Unintended Consequences?

Throughout the so-called “opioid crisis” severe chronic pain patients who legitimately take opioids have been neglected, humiliated, and even deprived of medication to the point that suicide has been chosen by some patients as their “only option”. The trend toward use of the term “Opioid Use Disorder” (OUD) to describe anyone who has taken has opioids for an extended period has served to obscure a critical distinction: the difference between patients who use opioids only for pain relief and persons who may or may not receive pain relief, but whose opioid use is also associated with adverse consequences. The increasing use of the term OUD is perpetuating the stigmatization of severe chronic pain patients. Too many legitimate, constant intractable pain patients are erroneously being pejoratively labelled as having OUD. ***We call on constant, severe incurable pain patients who have used opioids responsibly and successfully, as well as their family members, to vigorously deny they have OUD and correct any medical professional or other person who incorrectly applies the term to them.*** We believe the ongoing misuse of the term OUD is a very serious problem that must be actively confronted by the chronic pain community.

**Adhesive Arachnoiditis: Going Forward Leadership Conference, November 14 & 15, Gulfport MS.** Join Dr. Forest Tennant and national arachnoiditis advocacy leadership for two days of learning, and developing strategies to bring diagnosis and treatment to every community. Explore new advances in treatment, diagnostics, and tips for living well with adhesive arachnoiditis. See the attached conference poster for more details. Register today to attend at: <https://www.tickettailor.com/events/tennantfoundation>. Sponsored by the The Arachnoiditis Research and Education Project of the Tennant Foundation.

**HHS Announces Guide for Clinicians on the Appropriate Dosage Reduction or Discontinuation of Long-Term Opioid Analgesics.** On October 10, 2019, the Department of Health and Human Services published an 8-page guide to appropriate and responsible tapering of opioid pain medications in circumstances where risks outweigh benefits or patients wish to taper. Overall, the HHS guide provides helpful information to counter misinformation and misconceptions about when and how to taper opioids. From our perspective, the document could have been much more helpful if it had more clearly acknowledged and addressed those circumstances in which benefits outweigh risks. FIPR newsletter co-editor Anne Fuqua expressed her concerns in comments to the American Journal of Managed Care. You can read Anne’s comments at <https://www.ajmc.com/focus-of-the-week/hhs-issues-guide-to-reducing-longterm-opioid-use-without-harming-patients-in-chronic-pain>. You can view and download the guide at [https://www.hhs.gov/opioids/sites/default/files/2019-10/Dosage\\_Reduction\\_Discontinuation.pdf](https://www.hhs.gov/opioids/sites/default/files/2019-10/Dosage_Reduction_Discontinuation.pdf). If you have already been or expect to be tapered off your opioid medications, we recommend that you give a copy of this guide to your physician.

Please see page 2, Conference Poster, attached to our email as a separate pdf file, for conference details!

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