



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PAIN BC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO CO-CHAIR NEWLY ESTABLISHED CANADIAN PAIN TASK FORCE

April 3, 2019 – Vancouver, BC – The executive director of a BC-based chronic pain charity has been appointed to co-chair the newly created Canadian Pain Task Force, it was announced today. Maria Hudspith, Executive Director of Pain BC, along with Dr. Fiona Campbell, President of the Canadian Pain Society and Anesthesiologist at the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto, will co-chair the Task Force.

With 20% of the country's population living with persistent pain, Canadians are in desperate need of improved pain care and treatment in their communities. Canadians with chronic pain have been significantly impacted by the country's overdose crisis. In BC, more than half of people who have died of overdose had unmanaged physical pain. For those people with pain who don't use illicit drugs, the response to the overdose crisis has contributed to stigmatizing attitudes and behaviours around opioid prescribing and use, and inconsistencies in access to pain management.

In response to this need, the Honourable Ginette Petitpas Taylor, Minister of Health, announced the establishment of the Canadian Pain Task Force today at the [Canadian Pain Society's 40th Annual Scientific Meeting](#) in Toronto.

The Canadian Pain Task Force will work with the Government of Canada to address the barriers that exist in preventing people with persistent pain from receiving the care and treatment they need. The Task Force will bring together eight experts, including those who have lived experience with persistent pain, researchers and health care providers.

The development of the Canadian Task Force is a major step forward to improving health outcomes for Canadians living with pain, but there is much more work that lays ahead. Key priorities over the next three years will be to consult with stakeholders and governments across the country to:

1. Assess how chronic pain is currently addressed in Canada;
2. Identify best practices to prevent and manage chronic pain; and,
3. Disseminate findings to facilitate the implementation of these practices across the country.

"I'm extremely hopeful that by bringing together people with pain, health care providers and pain researchers from around the country, we'll be able to develop a greater understanding of the issues Canadians face with pain and that our work will lead to actionable decisions that improve the quality of life for the 1 in 5 who live with persistent pain in our country," said Maria Hudspith.

Pain BC is currently working with BC's Ministry of Health to advance a provincial pain strategy. This national work will further expand Pain BC's role in improving the lives of people with pain.

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About Pain BC

Pain BC is a collaborative registered charity comprised of people in pain, health care providers, researchers, and other supporters. Founded in 2008, our mission is to improve the lives of people in pain through empowerment, education, and innovation. Partnerships are the cornerstone of our work – we

collaborate with health authorities, regulatory bodies, governments, other NGOs, health professional associations, and businesses to achieve our mission.

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