

Chronic Pain is a Public Health Crisis

- The problem:** Chronic pain is the most common, costly and disabling chronic disease in the US today
- The obstacles:** Effective treatments remain elusive because: pain is complex, the problem has been neglected and underfunded, and drug development is slow and costly with a high failure rate
- The solution:** Preserve the NIH pain research budget and critical NIH infrastructure for coordinating pain research, sustain the \$640 million appropriation for the HEAL Initiative in FY26, and oppose changes to the current IDC rate

Chronic pain in the US

- Pain is the **#1** reason Americans seek medical care
- Chronic pain affects 50 million adults and almost 15 million children and adolescents
- Rates of new cases of chronic pain surpass that of other chronic diseases, including diabetes and hypertension
- Chronic pain costs more than \$560 billion annually and is the leading cause of long-term disability and workforce reduction
- Chronic pain impacts every aspect of our population from rural communities to military readiness

Barriers to effective treatment

- Chronic pain is a complex neurological disease that often co-exists with other chronic diseases such as cancer, Parkinson's, and Multiple Sclerosis
- Pain research has long been neglected and under-funded by the federal government
- Less than 2% of the NIH budget is spent on pain research, despite its enormous national burden
- Private industry funding of pain research declined due to its complexity and high drug-failure rates
- No new drugs have been approved for chronic pain in 15 years (with the exception of migraine)

How do we SOLVE this public health crisis? ➡ NIH support for pain research

- Pain research has advanced in the past 5 years, despite limited support; **now is not the time for cuts!**
- Protect the overall NIH pain research budget and critical NIH infrastructure for coordinating and administering pain research
- Ensure that a specific FY2026 appropriation for the Helping to End Addiction Long-term (HEAL) Initiative is comparable to FY2025 (\$640 million)
- Sustained support is the only way to solve the complex problem of chronic pain
- Oppose changes to the current indirect cost rate
 - Academic centers perform the vast majority of pain research. The costs include essential fees for physical and technological resources, as well as personnel to ensure compliance with federal regulations
- Federal-academic partnerships are the most cost-effective solution to continuing the growth and innovation of STEM in the US and to training pain researchers and clinicians to ensure the future pipeline grows

65 Million Americans desperately need safe, effective, non-addictive pain treatments