

## **American College of Physicians Statement of Commitment on Countering the U. S. Opioid Epidemic**

The American College of Physicians (ACP) recognizes the opioid epidemic as a significant threat to public health. As the largest medical specialty organization in the U.S. representing 154,000 internal medicine members, internists are on the frontlines of the opioid crisis, and have seen first-hand how addiction and substance use disorders have impacted families and communities. ACP is committed to working with the National Academy of Medicine and other organizations on efforts to combat the opioid epidemic.

Despite current mandates, public health policies, payer policies, prescriber education, clinical guidelines and declarations of state and national emergencies, drug overdose deaths and opioid-involved deaths continue to rise precipitously in the U.S. The majority of drug overdose deaths (more than six out of ten) involve the use of an opioid. The current rate of accidental deaths and drug poisoning attributed to the use of opioids is still far too high and continues to rise.

ACP addresses the opioid epidemic from an educational, informational and advocacy-based approach through the following:

- Articles and evidence-based studies published in *Annals of Internal Medicine*
- A robust set of educational offerings
- Advocacy efforts for both physicians and patients to communicate with legislators and regulatory entities

ACP is developing an evidence-based educational program that includes a comprehensive pain curriculum for primary care/internal medicine that addresses the issues such as: inappropriately starting opioids, managing chronic pain with non-opioids (including pharmacologic and non-pharmacologic therapies), weighing the risk/benefit of opioid therapy and appropriately monitoring patients on opioids. ACP recognizes the need for comprehensive, practical approaches to educating physicians on this important topic.

ACP believes that existing efforts need to be combined with practical, physician and patient co-designed training to help successfully address the needs of patients with acute and chronic pain, while simultaneously reducing addiction rates and overdoses.