

## NIH Commitment Statement

America's opioid crisis requires extraordinary focus and collaboration by all segments of society. Now is the time to channel the efforts of the scientific community to deliver effective and sustainable solutions to this devastating public health emergency. Recognizing this opportunity, Congress provided \$500 million to the National Institutes of Health (NIH), starting in fiscal year 2018 for research on pain management and opioid misuse and addiction.<sup>1</sup> The NIH has directed these much needed resource towards a bold new trans-NIH effort called the HEAL (Helping to End Addiction Long-term<sup>SM</sup>) Initiative.<sup>3</sup>

The NIH HEAL Initiative<sup>SM</sup> will build on extensive, well-established NIH research, including basic science of the complex neurological pathways involved in pain and addiction, implementation science to develop and test treatment models, and research to integrate behavioral interventions with medication-based treatment for opioid use disorder (OUD). Successes from this research include the development of the nasal form of naloxone, the most commonly used nasal spray for reversing opioid overdose, the development of buprenorphine for the treatment of OUD, and evidence for the use of nondrug and mind/body techniques such as yoga, tai chi, acupuncture, and mindfulness meditation to help people control and manage pain.

The NIH HEAL Initiative seeks to foster innovative partnerships with other government agencies, academic institutions, industry, communities, and patient advocates. In consultation with individuals from these groups, the NIH has developed a research plan for the NIH HEAL Initiative that is focused on improving treatments for opioid misuse and addiction as well as enhancing strategies for pain management:

### **Improving Prevention and Treatment for Opioid Misuse and Addiction:**

- Expand therapeutic options for opioid addiction, overdose prevention and reversal
- Enhance treatments for infants born with Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome (NAS)/Neonatal Opioid Withdrawal Syndrome (NOWS)
- Develop new or improved prevention and treatment strategies for addiction
- Optimize effective treatment strategies for opioid addiction

### **Enhancing Pain Management:**

- Understand the biological underpinnings of chronic pain
- Accelerate the discovery and pre-clinical development of non-addictive pain treatments
- Advance new non-addictive pain treatments through the clinical pipeline
- Establish the best pain management strategies for acute and chronic pain conditions

With our partners, the NIH will take an "all hands on deck" approach to developing and delivering the scientific tools that will help end this crisis and prevent it from reemerging in the future.