



## **Program of Research to Integrate Substance Use Issues into Mainstream Healthcare**

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### **PRISM Meeting Notes November 1, 2007 Washington D.C.**

On November 1, 2007 the Program of Research to Integrate Substance Use Issues into Mainstream Healthcare (PRISM) convened a second meeting at the national headquarters of the Society of General Internal Medicine (SGIM) in Washington D.C. to present and discuss evidence and existing tools for managing patients on opioid therapy. The meeting was co-hosted by Dr. Barbara J. Turner, Professor of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania and Dr. Richard Denisco, Health Scientist Administrator at the Division of Epidemiology, Services and Preventions Research at the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA).

Two distinguished experts in the field of substance abuse and chronic pain management presented: Dr. Daniel Alford, Associate Professor of Medicine at Boston University School of Medicine, and Dr. David Fiellin, Associate Professor of Medicine at Yale University. Several researchers and administrators from NIDA and the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism attended, along with clinician educators, physicians and fellows from such major medical institutions as Cornell, Georgetown University, Brown University, the University of Missouri, New York University, the University of Oklahoma and the Medical Associates Clinic in Iowa.

Dr. Alford presented on existing physician tools available to treat chronic pain, including various screening questionnaires and guidelines for assessing pain intensity, identifying risk factors for addiction, and treatment planning. There was consensus on the need for more research to identify effective models of care for opioid seeking/using patients, especially in primary care based practices. Many participants agreed that additional clinical guidelines were not needed but that targeted trainings beginning in medical school were necessary, reinforced by additional certifications and CMEs and possibly more physician tools that can be incorporated into the EMR.

Dr. David Fiellin's presentation reviewed current evidence on the effectiveness of opioid medication in treating chronic pain. Existing studies are problematic because of small sample size and/or short duration, as well as paucity of non-controlled, non-randomized methodologies and reliance on studies funded by pharmaceutical companies. Discussion focused on the need for government-funded research to develop an evidence-driven algorithm covering a range of opioid and non-opioid treatment options. Better understanding of practice models that may foster patient addiction and/or diversion is a critical need, possibly addressed through observational research leading to randomized trials as well as prospective cohort studies.

The remainder of the meeting was devoted to progress reports and discussion on projects underway by the American Geriatrics Society (AGS), the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) and the American College of Physicians (ACP).