

## Putting National Focus on the Pain Problem

*NIH ESTABLISHES 11 UNIVERSITY-BASED PAIN CENTERS TO BETTER EDUCATE HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS ON EFFECTIVE PAIN MANAGEMENT.*

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The National Institutes of Health's [Pain Consortium](#), established "to enhance pain research and promote collaboration among researchers across the many NIH Institutes and Centers that have programs and activities addressing pain," has named 11 "Centers of Excellence in Pain Education" at universities across the nation in an unprecedented effort to better equip health care practitioners to manage pain effectively. According to the NIH, the goal of the project is to give practitioners "a solid understanding of pain as part of their basic education, with the aim of improving pain treatment while reducing the risk of prescription opioid abuse. These Centers will establish curriculum on pain which will be used in courses at these Centers, and the adoption of these curricula at other academic institutions will be encouraged by various form of outreach."

The 11 schools designated as Centers of Excellence in Pain Education are the University of Washington, Seattle; the University of Pennsylvania Perelman School of Medicine, Philadelphia; Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville; the University of Rochester, N.Y.; the University of New Mexico, Albuquerque; the Harvard School of Dental Medicine, Boston; the University of Alabama at Birmingham; the Thomas Jefferson University School of Medicine, Philadelphia; the University of California, San Francisco; the University of Maryland, Baltimore; and the University of Pittsburgh.



[New York Chiropractic College](#) is participating as a collaborating partner at the University of Rochester location. NYCC chiropractors and acupuncturists, along with faculty from St. John Fisher College's Wegmans School of Nursing and School of Pharmacy, will collaborate with faculty members from various departments at the University of Rochester Medical Center, as well as the university's Eastman Institute of Oral Health, Golisano Children's Hospital, the School of Nursing, and the Center for Experiential Learning.

The multidisciplinary project team, led by O.J. Sahler, MD, a University of Rochester professor and pediatrician at university-affiliated Golisano Children's Hospital, will focus on pain in several specific patient populations, including young children, the elderly and people with dental / facial conditions.

"One of our goals is to develop materials that will be appropriate for use by students who are just beginning, whether they are training to be doctors, chiropractors, nurses, dentists, pharmacists, or

other professionals," said Dr. Sahler. "Learning early in their careers about the many ways to assess and treat pain will provide them with critical lifelong skills."

The Rochester Center for Excellence in Pain Education will create five detailed [case studies](#) of patients with pain: a 7-year-old boy who suffered a brain injury during birth and is in severe pain; an 80-year-old woman with back pain; a 66-year-old woman with lung cancer; a 15-year-old girl with jaw pain; and a 34-year-old woman with severe abdominal and pelvic pain. Case studies will be posted online, allowing review by health care providers worldwide. The project is funded by a \$275,000 grant from the NIH.

"Virtually all health professionals are called upon to help patients suffering from pain," said NIH Director Francis Collins, MD, PhD, in an NIH release announcing the 11 centers. "These new centers will translate current research findings about pain management to fill what have been recognized as gaps in curricula so clinicians in all fields can work with their patients to make better and safer choices about pain treatment."

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