



PAIN RELIEF / PREVENTION

Did Big Pharma Shut Down Leading Integrative Pain Management Organization?

Editorial Staff

The Academy of Integrative Pain Management (AIPM) - known until a few years ago as the American Academy of Pain Management (AAPM) - has announced it is ceasing operations despite 30 years as a leading voice for integrative pain management and partner in the Integrative Pain Care Policy Congress (2017 and 2018), "the only collective of its kind to unite representatives from 75+ organizations and agencies - including licensed and certified health care professionals, public and private payers, people living with pain, federal agencies, purchasers of health care, researchers, policymakers, and policy experts - to improve access to comprehensive integrative pain management (CIPM) for all."¹

"This is an incredibly difficult and sad decision," said Bob Twillman, PhD, executive director, in an AIPM [press release](#). "Our message has never been more relevant than now, amid the nation's opioid crisis, yet we have found it increasingly difficult to maintain the resources needed to sustain our efforts. We are proud of our message and of what we have accomplished, especially over the last several years. We hope that others will step into the void we will leave in the pain field and carry on this vital work."

According to Twillman, declining support from Big Pharma - yes, Big Pharma - is one of the factors that ultimately forced AIPM's hand. "The irony is that attacking the pharma companies has ended up hurting the effort to attack the opioid problem with sane pain practices," he revealed in [an interview](#) with *The Integrator Blog*.²



While Big Pharma (particularly opioid manufacturers) used to provide up to 20 percent of the American Academy of Pain Management's budget in the form of event sponsorships and other funding - which the AAPM actually used to advocate for an integrative model of pain management - those contributions dropped precipitously once AAPM officially [changed its name](#) to include the word *integrative*.

Opioid awareness and the national shift away from opioid promotion also undoubtedly played a role. According to Dr. Twillman in *Integrator Blog*: "In the pain space, the vast majority of resources have always been from opioid manufacturers. Now the companies are all fearing lawsuits [related to damage from opioids]. They are dropping their support. All the pain organizations are feeling economic pressure, all are struggling with the decline."²

With the AIPM announcement, DCs and other providers are left with questions: How will this void impact pain management advocacy and policy moving forward? What about practitioners who earned a diplomate or other designation with the organization? Will another organization be formed to continue the AIPM's mission? Stay tuned.

References

1. "Academy of Integrative Pain Management to Cease Operations." AIPM press release, Jan. 29, 2019.
2. Weeks J. "Huge Loss to U.S. Pain Policy: Academy of Integrative Pain Management Shuts Down." *Integrator Blog*, Feb. 9, 2019.

