

**Exploring the Treatment and Management of Chronic Pain and
Implications for Disability Determinations: A Workshop**

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Patient Advocate

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Topics

Introduction

**Patient Experiences with SSA Disability
Program**

Barriers to Care

Recommendations

Why This Matters

INTRODUCTION

Andrea Anderson

Patient Advocate

- **Build strategic relationships with national experts, health care professionals, and state and federal agencies related to pain policy, legislation, and treatment guidelines**
- **Protect access to treatment and provide relief to those with persistent, high-impact, or chronic pain**
- **Advisor to the National Pain Advocacy Center; former Executive Director of The Alliance for the Treatment of Intractable Pain**



Image is a headshot of the presenter, Andrea Anderson. She has blonde, shoulder-length hair, green eyes, and is smiling.

Patient with Persistent, High-Impact Pain

Advocate

Advisor



Image is of the author, Andrea Anderson, in 2006, along with three of her children. They are all sitting in front of a fireplace that is decorated for Christmas. She is holding two oversized Nutcrackers. Visible from the fireplace mantle are multiple Christmas stockings.

What is High-Impact Chronic Pain?

High-Impact Chronic Pain

- 10.6 million people have high-impact chronic pain
- Causes activity limitations
- Unable to work, have difficulty with self-care

Disability

“Disabilities experienced by people with high-impact chronic pain were more closely related to their frequent pain than to their other health issues.”

1. Pitcher MH, Von Korff M, Bushnell MC, Porter L. [Prevalence and profile of high impact chronic pain in the United StatesLink to External Link Policy](#). *Journal of Pain*. 2019;20(2):146-160.1.

Experiences Of Those On The SSA Disability Program

Barriers To Care

- **Challenges with Qualifying and Acceptance**
- **Lack of Access to Clinicians**
- **Financial Constraints**
- **Pharmacy Access**
- **Increased Experience of Disability**

Barriers to Care

Recommendations

- **Increase staff and training to improve wait time for applications to acceptance and time spent on phone and in-person visits**
- **Increase reimbursement rates to clinicians who treat people with complex conditions and persistent pain**
- **Allow patients to see more than one provider on a single day**
- **Allow patients to store emergency medications in case of disaster**
- **Increase mail order pharmacy access**
- **Increase cost of living adjustments beyond Medicare premium increases**
- **Provide greater lower-cost housing and transportation options**

Recommendations

Providing Disability Services: Why it Matters

- “What matters most is that each individual, regardless of disability, is able to reach their maximum level of achievement and independence, given their specific circumstances.”¹

- Marin Center for Independent Living

1. Marin Center for Independent Living
<https://www.marincil.org/>
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Thank You

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