

# Colorado Pain Society Newsletter #2

Greetings! CPS hopes that you have started 2023 off well.

## **CPS BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

I would like to introduce you to our current Board of Directors and some ad hoc committee members who are helping us serve our membership and patients in very specific roles. We invite you to share your ideas or observations with us and consider offering your time and talent towards a project that you feel passionate about.

Jon Clapp: Past-President

Scott Bainbridge: President

Rachael Rzasa Lynn: Vice-President

Josh Blum: Secretary

Ellen Price: Treasurer

Ad hoc members/roles: Brent Van Dorsten (Past-President), Eric Shoemaker (membership), Drew Trainor (liaison to Pacific Spine and Pain Society), Ken Finn (Liaison to Texas Pain Society), John Sacha (workers' compensation / CDLE)

Annellie Vallone: administrator

[COPainSociety@gmail.com](mailto:COPainSociety@gmail.com)

## **OPIOID GUIDELINE UPDATE**

The CDC Clinical Practice Guideline for Prescribing Opioids for Pain 2022 is much improved over the 2016 version. There is an expressed desire to avoid unintended harms by recommending against the guidelines being used by payers, governmental or other healthcare bodies to arbitrarily restrict dosing or force tapers of chronic pain patients. There is also more leeway given to pain specialists. CPS, however, would like its members to be alert to any controlling companies or agencies acting in a manner contrary to these expressed CDC wishes. Please let us know if you are seeing policies or trends that may force our patients into [unintended] harm's way. To learn more about the "Guideline", please use the following links and resources.

CDC Opioid Guideline 2022:

[Guideline at a Glance](#)

[CDC Clinical Practice Guideline for Prescribing Opioids for Pain 2022](#)

[Colorado DORA Guidelines for the Safe Prescribing and Dispensing of Opioids \(Revised 3/14/19\)](#)

Consortium Lunch and Learn 2022 CDC Opioid Guidelines: What clinicians need to know:

Joshua Blum, MD's excellent presentation can be accessed at: <https://vimeo.com/788780816>

## MEMBERSHIP

It is CPS membership renewal season, and we ask you to renew your membership and help us to recruit new members so that we continue to grow in meaningful ways. We are also updating and enhancing our web site this year and one goal is to ensure that we have your accurate contact information on our Pain Care Provider Locator page, so please confirm your information. We would love to see 100% involvement of all pain care providers within each practice.

You may have seen this recent email blast regarding membership:

Greetings and Happy Holidays ~

In preparation for the new year, a quick reminder that membership in the Colorado Pain Society is renewed in January. Please note that the annual dues will be \$150 and take effect in 2023.

As a member of the Colorado Pain Society, you are part of a professional community with a sustained interest in pain disorders and their management. Members represent a variety of disciplines, including physicians, physician assistants, nurses, psychologists and therapists. CPS members come from a variety of disciplines and work settings and are involved in basic research, clinical research, treatment, advocacy, and public policy. Members of CPS benefit in many ways:

- Support of continued professional development through access to multidisciplinary continuing educational programs.
- Opportunities for networking with other pain professionals.
- Discounted fees for all CPS-sponsored educational opportunities including our Annual Pain Conference.
- Meetings to learn about what is happening with the Colorado Consortium and other political events that affect your world.
- Advocacy with the Colorado Medical Society, state legislature, regional and national involvement in all that affects the profession of pain management.
- Membership directory on our website to assist you with networking with other member pain professionals.

We want to Thank You for your continued loyalty and support of the Colorado Pain Society. You make what we do possible!

*Questions about membership? Anything else? Please contact me or visit our website at: <https://coloradopainsociety.org>.*

*Annellie Vallone*

*Event Planning / Administrative Manager*  
*Colorado Pain Society*  
802.318.4665

### **HB-1276 Should Now Be Enforceable!**

PT, OT, acupuncture, chiropractic, tapentadol and buprenorphine for pain should now all be affordable and accessible to anyone with commercial insurance. Thank you to CPS BOD's Jon Clapp, MD, Representative Chris Kennedy, CMS and many others for their efforts to make this a reality. Look for an email from CPS for more details.

### **MEDICAL POLICIES UPDATE**

We have previously written about the practice advantages of having staff and providers familiar with relevant payer medical policies to accurately set patient care expectations, properly document and order medications, procedures, DME, etc., and enhance efficiency along the authorization, reimbursement, and audit continuum. Here are updated medical policy links as well as an important 2023 update from Anthem/AIM regarding interventional pain procedures.

Updated and additional medical policy links (see CPS Newsletter #1):

Medicare (MC): Novitas Solutions Jurisdiction H;  
<https://novitas-solutions.com> > Part B Provider > LCD > Medical Policy Search Tool > 64493, 64635, 62323, or 64483

BCBS (AIM; Not all BCBS plans follow these guidelines):

<https://aimspecialtyhealth.com/resources/clinical-guidelines/musculoskeletal/>

United Healthcare (UH): <https://www.uhcprovider.com/en/policies-protocols/commercial-policies/commercial-medical-drug-policies.html>

Cigna (Evicore): <https://www.evicore.com/cigna>

Aetna TFESI [http://www.aetna.com/cpb/medical/data/700\\_799/0722.html](http://www.aetna.com/cpb/medical/data/700_799/0722.html)

Aetna Facet Injections, RFA, and ILES

[http://www.aetna.com/cpb/medical/data/1\\_99/0016.html](http://www.aetna.com/cpb/medical/data/1_99/0016.html)

**Subject: Updates to AIM Specialty Health Musculoskeletal -  
Interventional Pain Management *Clinical Appropriateness Guidelines***

Dear Provider:

Beginning with dates of service on or after April 9, 2023, Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield and our subsidiary company, HMO Colorado (Anthem), the following updates will apply to the AIM Specialty Health® (AIM)\* Musculoskeletal - Interventional Pain Management *Clinical Appropriateness Guidelines*. As part of the AIM guideline annual review process, these updates are focused on advancing efforts to drive clinically appropriate, safe, and affordable healthcare services.

**Interventional pain management - updates by section:**

- ï Epidural steroid injections:
  - o For nerve root compression due to herniated disc, specified that the MRI/CT showing this finding must have been done within 18 months instead of 12 months.
- ï Selective nerve root block:
  - o Included a second session for cases requiring evaluation of more than one level.
- ï Therapeutic intra-articular facet injections:
  - o Included criteria for repeat injections in patients who met criteria for an initial injection.
- ï Conservative management requirements:
  - o Aligned definitions with joint surgery, spine surgery, spine, and extremity imaging guidelines.
  - o More rigorous definition of the supervised home physical therapy requirement and removed cognitive behavioral therapy as a conservative care modality.
  - o Included activity modification and a trial of rest.
- ï Epidural steroid injections:
  - o Specified that only one spinal region may be treated per date of service.
  - o For repeat injection, prior injection must have provided improvement for three months instead of three weeks.
- ï Diagnostic medial branch block:
  - o Specified that up to four diagnostic sessions may be done in a rolling 12-month period (previously three).
  - o Reduced the number of unilateral levels that may be done in a session from three to two.
- ï Thermal medial branch radiofrequency neurotomy:
  - o Reduced the number of unilateral levels that may be done in a session from three to two.
  - o Specified a maximum of two radiofrequency sessions per rolling 12-month period.
- ï Regional sympathetic nerve block:
  - o Specified that procedure must be performed using imaging guidance.
  - o Specified that the procedure must be performed unilaterally.
  - o Specified a lifetime maximum of six blocks.
  - o Removed exclusions that referred to procedures which are no longer performed.

**COLORADO DIVISION OF WORKERS' COMPENSATION (DOWC) CHANGES AFFECTING BILLING**

There have been important updates to rules 16 and 18 related to workers' compensation billing and reimbursement. Pinnacol Assurance has summarized these changes in their update:

[http://pinnacol-8020722.hs-sites.com/provider-update-important-2023-division-rule-changes?ecid=ACsprvtDcntne2FCVPn3al2haJKfBJOEjh7xxPxu9F6VcG5iaOj4GnG68udCcKelAAOPg9YJLHJK&utm\\_campaign=Provider&utm\\_medium=email&hsmi=241421450&hsenc=p2ANqtZ-9bFFuP85mdHF\\_qHWekFSszQAT50yNGeZjyirpSYugl1TP1MY9IvkLgMvJTAbys1aYjeGBWRqQl1ZIxZUqGJOToc2qTTOfxiBUX-UJdBYI6vBw9Wg&utm\\_content=241421450&utm\\_source=hs\\_email](http://pinnacol-8020722.hs-sites.com/provider-update-important-2023-division-rule-changes?ecid=ACsprvtDcntne2FCVPn3al2haJKfBJOEjh7xxPxu9F6VcG5iaOj4GnG68udCcKelAAOPg9YJLHJK&utm_campaign=Provider&utm_medium=email&hsmi=241421450&hsenc=p2ANqtZ-9bFFuP85mdHF_qHWekFSszQAT50yNGeZjyirpSYugl1TP1MY9IvkLgMvJTAbys1aYjeGBWRqQl1ZIxZUqGJOToc2qTTOfxiBUX-UJdBYI6vBw9Wg&utm_content=241421450&utm_source=hs_email)

## **COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS**

CPS has established an excellent relationship with The Colorado Medical Society over the years and participates in many of the formative advocacy, policy, and legislative discussions relating to pain management. We look to build new bridges this year and have or will be reaching out to the Pacific Spine and Pain Society, Texas Spine Society, Colorado Behavioral Health Administration, and others.

## **WEBSITE UPDATE**

We will be updating our website with new content and functionality.

## **SAVE THE DATE FOR THE CPS ANNUAL MEETING 2023!**

We will host the 2023 AM at The Hythe in Vail from October 13-15. We hope to see you there!