

UPDATE



neurosurgery

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Neurosurgeons Participate in FDA Public Hearing on Opioid Use

Agency's Efforts to Curb Opioid Misuse Must Preserve Patient Access to Medically-necessary Opioids

Washington, DC—Today, the American Association of Neurological Surgeons (AANS) and Congress of Neurological Surgeons (CNS) participated in a U.S. Food and Drug Administration [public hearing](#), “Opioid Policy Steering Committee: Prescribing Intervention—Exploring a Strategy for Implementation.” The purpose of this meeting was to receive stakeholder input on how FDA might, under its Risk Evaluation and Mitigation Strategy (REMS) authority, improve the safe use of opioid analgesics by curbing overprescribing to decrease the occurrence of new addictions and limit misuse and abuse of opioid analgesics.

Robert F. Heary, MD, FAANS, professor of neurosurgery at Rutgers New Jersey Medical School and chair of the AANS/CNS Committee on Drugs and Devices, participated in the hearing. Recognized as an expert in this area, Dr. Heary fully understands the importance of neurosurgeons taking a lead role in the prevention, management and treatment of pain.

In our statement, the AANS, CNS, the AANS/CNS Section on Pain and AANS/CNS Section on Disorders of the Spine and Peripheral Nerves, agreed with the objective of reducing inappropriate opioid prescribing, addressed concerns about many of the logistical issues involved in achieving this goal and highlighted the routine use of prescription drug monitoring programs and opioid contracts for chronic opioid users as examples of laudable efforts to optimize the prescribing of opioids.

“The AANS and CNS believe that reasonable mechanisms can be created to both curb inappropriate opioid prescribing practices while preserving access to opioids to those patients who would likely benefit from them,” Dr. Heary observed. He added, “We greatly appreciate the opportunity to work with the FDA to optimize opioid prescribing in an effort to address the opioid crisis in America today, while at the same time aggressively treating pain to reduce suffering.”

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The American Association of Neurological Surgeons (AANS), founded in 1931, and the Congress of Neurological Surgeons (CNS), founded in 1951, are the two largest scientific and educational associations for neurosurgical professionals in the world. These groups represent over 8,000 neurosurgeons worldwide. Neurological surgery is the medical specialty concerned with the prevention, diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation of disorders that affect the entire nervous system, including the spinal column, spinal cord, brain and peripheral nerves. For more information, please visit www.aans.org or www.cns.org, read our blog www.neurosurgeryblog.org, follow us on [Twitter](#) or connect with us on [Facebook](#).