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**KANSAS HEALTH ORGANIZATIONS SAY MANY KANSANS  
NEEDLESSLY LIVE IN PAIN**

*State Coalition Sets Precedent For Pain Management With Guidelines For Care*

**WICHITA, KANSAS, October 22, 2002** – A group of state medical organizations and patient advocacy groups say that too many Kansans are living with pain needlessly. In fact, eighty-six percent of terminally ill Kansans experienced moderate-to-severe pain during the last three months of their lives, according to a survey of their family members and friends collected through the Kansas 2000 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System. The Kansas LIFE Project is a coalition of Kansas health organizations, consumer advocacy groups and public policy leaders working together to improve end-of-life care. LIFE Project Partners, as a part of their efforts to improve pain management, are issuing the nation's first joint policy statement on the use of controlled substances for the treatment of pain.

More than 50 million Americans have persistent pain caused by a variety of diseases and medical conditions and each year another 25 million people experience acute pain, resulting from an injury or surgery. Yet, the myths and misconceptions surrounding pain management still prevent them from receiving and demanding appropriate treatment.

To demonstrate a strong commitment to excellence in pain management, the coalition announced the "Joint Policy Statement of the Kansas State Board of Healing Arts, Board of Nursing and Board of Pharmacy on the Use of Controlled Substances for the Treatment of Pain." The statement was developed as an important step to ensure that people with pain receive the treatment they deserve.

"These guidelines are an important and visible sign to all Kansans that their health care community, their patient and family support groups, and their professional licensing boards are committed to ensuring that they receive the best possible pain management," said Donna Bales, President and CEO, The Kansas LIFE Project. "All Kansans should expect excellence in the assessment and management of acute and chronic pain."

There are numerous barriers to good pain management. In many cases, myths and misconceptions about opioid analgesics may hinder appropriate treatment. Many Kansans fail to take their medications as prescribed because of their fears of addiction, unwanted side effects and costs. Additionally, some health care professionals lack the knowledge to appropriately manage their patients' pain, since many medical and nursing school curricula do not include adequate training on pain management. Further, some health care professionals fear that the state licensing board, regulatory agency, or law enforcement agency will investigate and take action against them for their prescribing, administering, or dispensing practices.

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**Pain Management HotLine: 913-588-3692**

*The LIFE Project Foundation is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization*

“The goal of appropriate pain management is to reduce the individual’s pain to the lowest level possible, while simultaneously increasing the individual’s ability to function,” said Robert Twillman, PhD, Kansas Pain Initiative, Kansas University Medical Center. “This joint policy statement is an important milestone in addressing the issues surrounding appropriate pain management and quality of care at the end-of-life.”

The joint policy statement:

- Recognizes that pain is inadequately treated;
- Encourages adequate treatment of chronic and acute pain;
- Acknowledges that a patient’s report of pain should be the optimal standard upon which all pain management programs are based;
- Provides health care providers with the knowledge that they need not fear discipline from their board if they competently treat pain and follow established state and federal requirements.

### **About The Kansas LIFE Project**

The Kansas LIFE Project– Living Initiatives For End-of-Life Care-Project – is a collaborative effort of over 70 Kansas organizations, agencies and associations working to help Kansans live with dignity, comfort and peace as they near the end of life. The LIFE Project develops and implements strategic initiatives aimed at improving end-of-life care.

The Kansas LIFE Project, since its inception nearly five years ago, has focused on helping Kansans live with dignity, comfort and peace as they near the end of life. The Kansas LIFE Project is working to improve pain management through better pain assessment and treatment of chronic, acute and terminal pain. Its goal is to increase awareness among Kansans that they should expect good pain management.

Kansans may find more information on pain and on end-of-life care by visiting the LIFE Project website at [www.lifeproject.org](http://www.lifeproject.org) and by calling the LIFE Project toll-free helpline at 888.202.LIFE and the LIFE Project Pain Management HotLine at 913-588-3692.

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