



American Pain Foundation

Citizen's Stamp Advisory Committee
C/o Stamp Development
U.S. Postal Service
1735 North Lynn St., Suite 5013
Arlington, VA. 22309-6432

Subject: Power Over Pain Commemorative Stamp Proposal

Dear Citizen's Stamp Advisory Committee,

The American Pain Foundation and Pain Connection have joined together in requesting your kind consideration in highlighting chronic pain in your ongoing public awareness campaign. We respectfully submit the following proposal for the creation of a Power over Pain commemorative stamp.

Pain is a serious and costly public health issue affecting more than 76 million Americans. It affects more Americans than diabetes, heart disease and cancer combined according to the National Center for Health statistics. Pain affects all age groups from infants to the elderly. More than half of all hospitalized patients experienced pain in the last days of their lives and although therapies are present to alleviate most pain for those dying of cancer, research shows that 50 to 75% of patients die in moderate pain. Most Americans (80%) will suffer from back pain at some point in their lives. Even though pain is one of the most common reasons patients consult a health care provider, it is often inadequately assessed and treated, resulting in needless suffering and poor patient outcomes.

The economic toll of chronic pain exceeds \$100 billion each year in the United States alone. It is a leading cause of disability in the United States. Untreated or poorly managed pain can compromise every aspect of life, including a person's physical and mental health, social and financial well being. Chronic pain is not only emotionally and physically debilitating for patients, it also places a tremendous burden on families and caregivers, and contributes to excessive healthcare costs. As the 75 million Baby Boomers move toward retirement, the epidemic of untreated and undertreated pain is expected to continue.

Pain is a serious issue affecting military personnel and veterans. Although new medical technologies are saving the lives of our military personnel they are returning home with injuries and amputations that have been noted at double previous rates. Stigma and misconceptions about pain and its treatment contribute to delayed and ineffective management which can actually increase the incidence of chronic pain syndromes. Pain will be a major factor in the quality of life experienced by our wounded veterans.

Currently, less than 1% of the NIH research budget is dedicated to pain.

Research and education is needed to address this major healthcare issue. In the last 5 to ten years there has been a great increase in our understanding of the brain and our understanding of chronic pain as a separate “illness.” We are beginning to understand that there is a sensitization of the central nervous system that may contribute to some chronic pain conditions such as fibromyalgia and irritable bowel syndrome. More research is needed to continue to understand the role of the central nervous system and the immune system in chronic pain conditions.

Public awareness is needed to address this issue, an invisible health care crisis.

Awareness and education can help millions who now suffer silently in pain by removing barriers to care. Many do not receive the care they need because of the stigma related to chronic pain conditions perceived as a weakness or as a moral failing. Many health care providers do not receive adequate training in treating pain and chronic pain conditions. Please help us in our fight to increase awareness of the suffering from pain in this country. We all have a right to live as pain free as possible.

Stamp Subject Selection Criteria Addressed:

1. As noted above untreated and undertreated **Pain** is a serious healthcare issue in America.
2. No living person shall be honored based on this proposal.
3. This proposal does not involve an anniversary of any individual's death or birth.
4. This proposal does not involve an event of historical significance.
5. The under treatment of **Pain** is a topic of widespread national appeal and significance as noted above.
6. This proposal does not request honoring any fraternal, political, sectarian, or service/charitable organizations. There is no suggestion to promote or advertise any commercial enterprises or products.
7. This proposal does not suggest honoring of any cities, towns, municipalities, counties, primary or secondary schools, hospitals, libraries, or similar institutions.
8. This proposal does not involve any observance of statehood anniversaries.
9. This proposal does not request honoring any religious institutions or individuals.
10. Treatment of pain is a *cause* that is appropriate and in the national public interest from a humanitarian and fiscal perspective, as noted above.
11. This proposal does not request a commemoration of any universities or other institutions of higher education.
12. No stamp related to pain has been released in the past 50 years.

Sincerely,

Mary French, Pain Connection President



American Pain Foundation

Sign Below to Support The Power Over Pain Commemorative Stamp Petition

Please join the American Pain Foundation and Pain Connection by signing this petition to request the Citizen's Stamp Advisory Committee to create a Power Over Pain Commemorative Stamp. *Public awareness is needed to address this issue, an invisible health care crisis.* Awareness and education can help millions who now suffer silently in pain by removing barriers to care. Please take one minute to help all those in pain today.
