

Email to: Policycomments@wpsic.com

Subject: Public Comment on Denial of Coverage for Chronic Pain Procedures

Dear Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services,

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the proposed denial of coverage for chronic pain procedures, specifically peripheral nerve blocks, under Medicare. As an individual living with chronic pain, I urge CMS to reconsider this proposal and recognize the critical role these procedures play in managing pain and improving quality of life.

Chronic pain affects millions of Americans, many of whom are Medicare beneficiaries. For these individuals, nerve blocks and similar procedures are not elective or experimental—they are medically necessary treatments that often provide relief when other modalities have failed. Denying coverage for these procedures not only undermines patient care but also risks increasing reliance on systemic medications, including opioids, which carry significant risks and long-term costs.

Key points for consideration:

- **Clinical necessity:** Nerve blocks are often recommended by pain specialists after thorough evaluation. They can reduce pain, improve mobility, and enhance participation in physical therapy and daily activities.
- **Opioid alternatives:** In an era of opioid stewardship, interventional procedures offer a safer, targeted approach to pain management.
- **Cost-effectiveness:** While upfront costs may exist, these procedures can reduce emergency visits, hospitalizations, and long-term medication use, ultimately saving Medicare money.
- **Patient impact:** Many pain patients rely on nerve blocks to continue working. Removing coverage for nerve blocks could ultimately increase the number of individuals requiring disability.

I respectfully request that CMS engage with pain management experts, review current clinical guidelines, and consider the lived experiences of patients when evaluating coverage decisions. Chronic pain is a complex medical condition that deserves comprehensive, compassionate, and evidence-based care.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input. I hope CMS will prioritize patient well-being and restore coverage for these essential procedures.

Sincerely,