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## Preface

In recent years, I have found that the need for guidance in treating those suffering from chronic pain has increased, as the burden for those patients has become a very difficult issue in daily life. Our task has been overwhelming at times, when we consider the lack of knowledge that many of us found when considering issues that are not part of our personal repertoire and training. We must be mentors of others and elevate our practice, while at the same time maintain our patient-centric target. Not only do we need to train and nurture the medical student, but also those in postgraduate training and those in private and academic practice who are long separated from their training. We are burdened with complex issues such as the cost of chronic pain, loss of functional individuals to society, abuse, addiction, and diversion of controlled substances, complicated and high-risk spinal procedures, the increase in successful but expensive technology, and the humanistic morose that are part of the heavy load that we must strive to summit.

In this maze of difficulties, we find ourselves branded as “interventionalist” and “non-interventionalist.” In shaping this book, it was my goal to overcome these labels and give a diverse overview of the specialty. Separated into five sections, the contents of this book give balance to the disciplines that make up our field. There is a very complete overview of interventions, medication management, and the important areas of rehabilitation, psychological support, and the personal side of suffering. We have tried to give a thorough overview while striving to make this book practical for the physician who needs insight into the daily care of pain patients. This book was created as one of the many tools from the American Academy of Pain Medicine to shape the proper practice of those who strive to do the right things for the chronic pain patient focusing on ethics and medical necessity issues in each section. You will find that the authors, Associate Editor-in-chief, Associate Editors, and I have given rise to a project that will be all encompassing in its goals.

With this text, the American Academy of Pain Medicine has set down the gauntlet for the mission of educating our members, friends, and concerned parties regarding the intricacies of our specialty. I wish you the best as you read this material and offer you my grandest hope that it will change the lives of your patients for the better.

We must remember that chronic pain treatment, like that of diabetes and hypertension, needs ongoing effort and ongoing innovation to defeat the limits of our current abilities. These thoughts are critical when you consider the long standing words of Emily Dickinson...

“Pain has an element of blank; it cannot recollect when it began, or if there were a day when it was not. It has no future but itself, its infinite realms contain its past, enlightened to perceive new periods of pain.”

Best of luck as we fight our battles together.

Charleston, WV, USA

Timothy R. Deer, M.D.