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Statement on Nurses' Use of Integrative Therapies for Pain

Relief of pain is a fundamental human right. A widening array of effective therapies is available to treat pain conditions, yet not all treatments are widely available and not all are safe for every patient. According to the Institute of Medicine's *Relieving Pain in America* report, despite multiple treatment options, approximately 100 million adults are affected by persistent pain; more than the number affected by cancer, heart disease and diabetes combined. In addition, the Institute of Medicine notes that invasive interventions designed to treat painful conditions can result in unintended consequences. This necessitates recommendations for less invasive or less potentially harmful interventions, including complementary and alternative therapies used as part of the medical treatment plan, defined as integrative medicine.

Complementary therapies by definition are non-traditional therapies used with or to "complement" traditional medicine. Alternative therapies are non-traditional therapies used "in place of," or as an "alternative to" traditional medicine. Integrative medicine is differentiated from complementary medicine in that integrative medicine involves assimilating complementary therapies into traditional medical approaches. Integrative therapies for pain target improvements in function and pain relief.

The American Society of Pain Management Nursing® supports the use of complementary pain therapies used alone or in conjunction with traditional medical interventions. Integrative pain techniques can be used for populations of all ages, genders and pain presentations, and can be time efficient such as using relaxation or breathing. They can also be time extensive such as multiple sessions of acupuncture.

Nurses consider all available evidenced based pain care strategies and disciplines that focus on restoration of health and recognize an individual's capacity to heal. Nurses provide care, and assist the patient towards a positive and meaningful interpretation of the pain experience. Successful integrative pain nursing requires a collaborative and caring connection with the patient.

Nurses assess the biopsychosocial and spiritual needs of individuals experiencing pain. Nurses close proximity to patients provides a natural opportunity for developing awareness of comprehensive and multi-system needs when experiencing pain. This awareness combined with patient connection, guides nurses' recommended treatment options.

Treatment planning is ongoing, individualized and collaborative. Nurses utilize the patient's feedback to adjust treatment goals and interventions. Nurses inform patients of the risks and benefits of available interventions and guide patients towards interventions with the fewest side effects and greatest potential to relieve pain and increase restoration.

Integrative pain techniques are not reimbursed by the majority of insurance carriers despite increased use and popularity. Current payment models are focused on conventional medicine, not integrative or preventative care. ASPMN® believes there is a need for greater reimbursement for integrative pain interventions and greater access to in-network providers skilled in integrative care. ASPMN® promotes the need for further research of integrative pain interventions for purposes of selectivity, efficacy, limitations, safety, barriers to use and accessibility.