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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Confronting the Opioid Crisis With Evidence and Education: A National Initiative Is Launched

USF Health and CME Outfitters have received an educational grant from Johnson & Johnson to reach healthcare providers and patients with new strategies to manage acute and chronic pain

- *Addressing the Opioid Epidemic: A Call to Action to Save Our Communities* earns generous support from Johnson & Johnson to educate clinicians and patients on appropriate use of opioids
- Advisory board chaired by renowned addiction specialist Mark Gold, MD, with strategic direction from William Alden, chairman of the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) Educational Foundation
- Animation, augmented reality, and customized platforms that mix live and online delivery will reach thousands of providers, patients, and caregivers with information on safe opioid use and effective alternatives

**BETHESDA, Maryland (December 10, 2018)**– CME Outfitters (CMEO) and USF Health, two leading accredited providers in continuing medical education, announce the launch of a nationwide educational initiative to combat inappropriate use of opioids in the management of acute and chronic pain. The project, *Addressing the Opioid Epidemic: A Call to Action to Save Our Communities* has been generously supported by an educational grant from Johnson & Johnson.

The U.S. opioid crisis has seized the headlines as a threat to public health, safety, and even our social fabric. Change will require a team lift by healthcare providers, government agencies, advocacy groups, and law enforcement. It is the goal of this initiative to arm these stakeholders with the latest evidence and information that will ultimately lead to improvements in patient health literacy, better management of acute and chronic pain, and appropriate prescribing of opioids when their use is warranted.

Education is the foundation of change. This initiative will go beyond awareness about the opioid epidemic to provide strategies for improvements in clinical practice that will mobilize the healthcare workforce. The instructional design of this initiative will include video webcasts, national and regional symposia, print, and web-based activities. The target audiences are physicians, dentists, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, nurses, pharmacists, and patients. Animation and augmented reality will help healthcare providers better visualize and understand the biologic underpinnings of pain pathways so that their decision-making is focused on treatment alternatives that are targeted, effective and safe. Additionally, education will be designed for the patient, with input from patients, so that they better understand their treatment options, how to safely dispose of unused medication to ensure it is not illegally diverted, and to prepare them to help if a loved one is struggling with addiction or take action in case of an overdose.

Mark Gold, MD, American Society of Addiction Medicine's (ASAM) Annual Lifetime Achievement John P. McGovern Award Winner will chair the advisory board leading the initiative. Joining Dr. Gold on the advisory board to set the strategic direction is William Alden, Chairman of the DEA Educational Foundation. Dr. Gold emphasized the importance of the project, stating, "49,000 deaths were reported last year alone and more than 500,000 are projected to die over the next decade due to opioid-related causes, which include overdoses and other causes of death tied to opioids, such

as HCV and HIV infections. No single proposed medical or public health intervention alone will have much impact on these grim projections. However, improving diagnosis, intervening early, increasing the availability of naloxone, and expanding physician and drug-treatment programs could significantly reduce opioid-related deaths over the next 10 years. Education has to be a part of the mix to accomplish these goals. We are excited to begin this ambitious initiative to educate providers and patients in the fight against opioid addiction.”

USF Health and CME Outfitters will achieve a broad reach for the education by employing an extensive awareness strategy that leverages partnerships with multidiscipline and multi-specialty provider groups, key organizations and databases of target healthcare providers, a proven mix of digital and social media strategies, and distribution to patients through partnerships with patient leaders in pain management and substance use communities.

Visit [www.cmeoutfitters.com](http://www.cmeoutfitters.com) to stay up to date on the latest content and updates from this initiative.

### **About USF Health**

The University of South Florida (USF) created USF Health as an enterprise dedicated to making life better by improving health in the wider environment, in communities, and for individuals. USF Health has, as its core, the colleges of Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, and Public Health, including a School of Physical Therapy. Originally founded as USF College of Medicine in 1965, its name was changed to USF Health to reflect its collaborative focus on the full continuum of health. USF Health is fully accredited by the Liaison Committee for Medical Education. Continuing education and lifelong learning have always been an integral part of USF Health's educational mission. In 2015, USF Health was awarded Accreditation with Commendation for a third consecutive time by the ACCME for a six-year term. USF Health maintains multiple accreditations by other organizations such as, ANCC, ACPE, CHES, and CDR.

### **About CME Outfitters, LLC**

CME Outfitters develops, distributes and certifies continuing education activities that focus on the integration of the multidisciplinary care team to ensure the best care of patients. Our educational interventions include live meetings, interactive webcasts, medical simulations, infographics, and other innovative formats that leverage the latest in technology to optimize the learning environment and promote clinician and patient behavior changes. CME Outfitters also offers expert accreditation and outcome services for non-accredited organizations. CME Outfitters focuses on education to specialty audiences, with strong expertise in neuroscience, inflammatory, infectious, and autoimmune diseases, and cardiovascular disease. For a complete list of certified activities and more information, visit [www.cmeoutfitters.com](http://www.cmeoutfitters.com) or call 877.CME.PROS (877.263.7767).

### **About the DEA Educational Foundation**

Established in 2001, the DEA Educational Foundation is a 501c3 non-profit organization dedicated to preventing drug abuse. The foundation supports the DEA through advocacy, outreach, and educational programs. Learn more at [www.deaeducationalfoundation.org](http://www.deaeducationalfoundation.org).