Movement Toward the Non-pharmacological Treatment of Pain: Important Implications for IM4US

This presentation will highlight how current healthcare crisis has led to increasing interest in integrative medicine (IM) by the public and health professionals. Against this backdrop, the opioid crisis forced the medical community to make note of non-pharmacological approaches to pain. Initially, a number of reports from the FDA and National Academy of Medicine acknowledged the potential contributions of these approaches for pain management. Then, in the late spring of 2019, the Health and Human Services Pain Task Force included non-pharmacological and IM treatments among their recommendations for Pain Management Best Practices. This increased attention to non-pharmacological pain management has important implications for IM generally and specifically for IM4US. In particular, the lack of coverage for the now recommended IM approaches for pain management creates a barrier to the implementation of the HHS “best practices” for the entire public.

Given that the prevalence of chronic pain is highest among the underserved, it is essential that these non-pharmacological and integrative approaches are available to all those in need. This presentation will discuss how Federally Qualified Health Centers may offer a potential model that demonstrates how IM, with inclusion of non-pharmacological and lifestyle interventions, and multimodal, multidisciplinary team care can provide integrative healthcare for the United States. This presentation will conclude with a discussion of potential challenges and opportunities for IM4US to increase the effectiveness of integrative therapies for both the underserved and the general population.