

Narratives on Pain and Comfort

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Pain management has no meaning without the stories of men and women, and boys and girls whose lives are dramatically altered by the presence of pain in their own and their loved ones' lives. In this narrative section, four people present their perspectives on the enigma and challenge of pain, its power, and our on-going efforts to limit its hold on our lives.

In the first story, Dr. Robert McQuillan, an anesthesiologist with Creighton University School of Medicine, conveys the fear some patients suffering chronic pain face when seeking pain medication over the long term. Dr. Christine Cassel, chair of the Department of Geriatrics and Adult Development at Mount Sinai Medical Center and immedi-

ate past president of the American College of Physicians, recounts the plight of a fellow physician whose pain treatment of a patient led to suspension of his professional license and to personal bitterness after many years of exemplary medical practice. Reverend Jay Gabb, an ethicist with Alegent Health Systems, focuses on pain management as part of the larger interdisciplinary team approach designed to treat patients' physical, mental, and spiritual needs. Finally, Sandra Albertson, an English professor at Middlesex Community College, writes of her family's personal loss. In her narrative, she examines how the experience of losing a loved one goes beyond treatment in the health care system and affects the lives of those who survive.