

# Interview

## The Epidemic of Untreated Pain

An Interview with James R. Borynack,  
Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Wally Findlay Galleries International, Inc., and Director, American Pain Foundation



James R. Borynack

**EDITORS' NOTE** Eighteen years before acquiring Wally Findlay Galleries International, Inc., in 1998, James Borynack purchased Wally Findlay Galleries in New York, having already been its Director and Senior Vice President. His relationship with the company began in 1972, when he was hired as a salesman after having served as a partner at De Noyer, a boutique specializing in European high-fashion imports. He has also been associated with various government-related positions, including Cultural Attaché and Ambassador for Republicans Abroad International. In addition, he served as North American President of the auction house Phillips Son & Neale. He is an alumnus of New York's Parsons the New School for Design. Borynack serves on the Board of Governors of the National Hospice Foundation and is a Trustee of the American Pain Foundation.

**COMPANY BRIEF** As art dealers serving individuals, institutions, and corporate collectors, Wally Findlay Galleries International, Inc. ([www.wallyfindlay.com](http://www.wallyfindlay.com)), was founded in 1870 in Kansas City, Missouri. With galleries in New York, Barcelona, Los Angeles, and affiliates in London, Paris, and Monte Carlo, in addition to its flagship premises in Palm Beach, Florida, Wally Findlay Galleries specializes in Impressionist and Modern Masters and is considered one of the leading authorities of paintings of the École de Rouen (France). The gallery currently represents more than 40 contemporary artists worldwide creating

more than 50 exhibitions annually within their gallery network.

The American Pain Foundation ([www.painfoundation.org](http://www.painfoundation.org)) was founded in 1998 with the mission of improving the quality of life of people affected by pain. They work in three major areas: education and support for people living with pain and their care givers and family members; advocacy; and research promotion.

**How has the American Pain Foundation helped raise public awareness and are you happy with the level of awareness today for the key issues that you are addressing?**

There are millions of people in this country and around the world who are living with pain and dying in pain that is poorly assessed and poorly treated. The American Pain Foundation has successfully engaged national and local media, in reporting the epidemic of untreated pain.

Unfortunately, pain still remains low on the awareness scale for the American public. Because pain is a part of living, it is not seen as unusual or problematic. The public needs significant and continuous education about the problem of untreated and undertreated pain.

One of the challenges in making the public aware of this is the enormous media attention that is given to the harmful abuses and misuses of opioid medications. Opioids are abuseable, and for some, addictive substances. But opioids are also very powerful pain relievers, and for some people, they make the difference between being confined to bed in pain and living normal lives.

**The American Pain Foundation provides a great deal of information on research through its Web site. How critical is this research work to the organization?**

One of the major reasons that people live in unremitting pain is that there are pain diseases for which we have no effective treatments. We cannot help these people unless we uncover the answers to questions about the bio-mechanisms of these types of pain and discover treatment to counteract these mechanisms. In 2004, the NIH devoted less than 2 percent of its research dollars to pain research. In 2007, that number went down, despite the fact that pain is the number one reason people seek doctors' help. We will never help the millions of people in pain unless we significantly increase investment in pain research.

**The American Pain Foundation has a major focus on military veterans with pain.**

**Would you highlight your work in this regard and how the organization became involved with this focus?**

About four years ago, we noticed a significant increase in the number of requests we were receiving from people on military active duty and veterans. We realized that the pain they dealt with and the health systems they dealt with required special attention and information. In response, we developed the Military & Veterans in Pain Initiative. We worked closely with many others to help introduce and pass federal legislation, a military pain bill and a veteran's pain bill, both of which have created a major and organized focus on pain in the Department of Defense and the Veterans Administration. We also initiated a special Web site for military and veterans, which is based on a title of a very important book that we published about dealing with pain as a soldier or veteran called *Exit Wounds: A Survival Guide to Pain Management for Returning Veterans and Their Families*.

**What is the PainAid Online Support Community and how does it work?**

PainAid is an online community of people living with pain. The American Pain Foundation trains and supervises moderators who implement several ongoing live chats and hundreds of pain information and support bulletin boards on various critical topics. This service complements our very information-rich Web site, which is the number one pain Web site in use in the country.

**How can corporations and business leaders get involved with American Pain Foundation and these critical efforts?**

Untreated and poorly treated pain is a major cost to industry in America, estimated to be \$100 billion in labor costs. "Presenteeism," which is the cost associated with people at work who cannot perform at par due to their physical condition, is also a major cost to business. It would be smart business to promote improvements in the assessment and treatment of pain. The American Pain Foundation is ready to partner with leading businesses that understand the benefit of improving pain care. For one, we can work together on a national awareness campaign to highlight pain prevention and effective pain treatment policies for businesses. We can also become partners in disseminating the helpful resources of the American Pain Foundation to promote individuals to get better care for their pain. ●