

# TOP 4 THINGS A PAIN PHYSICIAN NEEDS TO KNOW BEFORE YOU REFER

By David A. Lindley, DO, Interventional Pain Management Of Texas

**W**hen chronic pain poses significant treatment challenges, referring to a pain physician may be helpful in managing patient care. Providing pertinent information about a patient’s history and the nature of the pain complaint can help pain physicians better direct treatment, and potentially shorten treatment time.

Dr. David Lindley, DO, an interventional pain management specialist in Texas, shares four essential pieces of information a pain physician should know before discussing treatment options with a referred chronic pain patient.

## THE BASICS

1

Don’t depend on patients to explain their history. While they will know the most pertinent information, they may not be able to explain the specifics. Share demographics,

medical history, and a current medication list. Pain physicians need to see the whole picture of a patient to better devise a treatment plan that will work for that individual.



## PSYCHOLOGICAL HISTORY

2

A person’s psychological history is just as important as their physical history— this information will help direct a treatment plan. But, says Dr. Lindley, this

is the piece that is most often missing. It is imperative, then, to share a patient’s history of psychological problems, suicide attempts, addiction, alcohol abuse, and in particular, use of opioid pain medications.



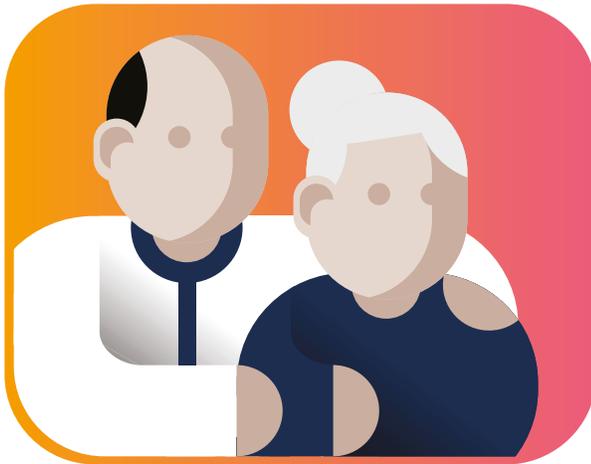
## IMAGING

3

Either through direct electronic access or provided by the patient on a disk, imaging studies (such as X-rays, computed tomography [CAT] scans, or magnetic resonance imaging [MRI] scans) should be provided.



**If imaging was done, I don't want the patient or their insurance to pay for new imaging. But if I don't have the information, I may have to punt the patient's care down the road until I can get it. – Dr. David A. Lindley, DO**



## WHAT'S ALREADY BEEN TRIED

4

Knowing the other measures of treatment a patient has tried, such as NSAIDs, physical therapy, opioids, or injections, is essential information for a pain physician to have. Dr. Lindley adds that details about the outcomes of the measures— which were attempted and what the result was—is also important for better treatment plans and outcomes.

Of course, the most important thing to send is the patient. But, says Dr. Lindley, don't wait until you have every shred of information in hand before making the referral. That first conversation with the patient is the biggest step toward effective treatment, he notes. "But if referring physicians can send this other information on a silver platter, it will speed up treatment."

*David A. Lindley, DO, has a consulting/speaking/financial relationship with Avanos Medical, Inc.*

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