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The Pain and Policy Studies Group would like to draw your attention to a recent report which reaffirms the support of international narcotics regulatory officials for efforts to improve the availability of opioids for the relief of pain. The *Report of the International Narcotics Control Board for 2002* states that the “Board welcomes the continued work of WHO...and supports the regional workshops on palliative care that have been organized by WHO. During 2002, such workshops were held in Africa, the Americas and Eastern Europe.” The Report noted the Congress of the Latin American Association of Palliative Care held in Guadalajara, Mexico in March 2002, which reviewed progress to improve opioid availability in Latin America. Previously, the INCB recognized WHO efforts to address regulatory impediments to opioid availability in India and Italy. The Board also endorsed the use by countries of the document “Achieving balance in national opioids control policy: guidelines for assessment.”

The WHO reports on regional palliative care and opioid availability workshops, as well as global and national opioid consumption trends, are available at:

<http://www.medsch.wisc.edu/painpolicy/publicat/monograp/globaltrends.htm>

The 2002 INCB Report can be seen at http://www.incb.org/e/ind_ar.htm

The WHO guidelines are on-line at <http://www.medsch.wisc.edu/painpolicy/publicat/00whoabi/00whoabi.htm>