

Position Statement on Hidradenitis Suppurativa (Approved by the Board of Directors: May 4, 2024)

Hidradenitis suppurativa (HS) is a prevalent chronic systemic inflammatory condition with substantial comorbidity burden and significant quality of life impacts due to severe pain, social ostracization, and the physical and emotional toll of this condition.¹⁻⁶ Dermatologists are uniquely positioned to diagnose and advocate for increased HS awareness, alongside providing effective and accessible comprehensive care for people with HS. Timely diagnosis and efficient management by dermatologists may prevent irreversible damage and enhance quality of life.^{3,7,8} Additionally, early medical and surgical intervention may alleviate the burden on healthcare systems and people.^{9,10} The American Academy of Dermatology (AAD) supports efforts to provide comprehensive care for people with HS, encompassing timely medical and procedural treatments and interdisciplinary care measures for associated pain, mental health, and other comorbid conditions.

To fulfill dermatology's commitment to and crucial role in caring for individuals living with HS, the following positions are recognized by the AAD:

- A) Provide Prompt Diagnosis and Timely Care:** Because HS onset typically occurs in adolescence and young adulthood, individuals affected by this condition struggle with it for most of their lives.¹¹ Moreover, diagnostic delays are observed in the groups most affected by the condition, including individuals of female sex, children, and Black Americans.^{12,13} Appropriate management early on in the disease course may impact disease progression and significantly improve the quality of life for those affected. Dermatologists are encouraged to prioritize prompt diagnosis and commencement of evidence-based treatments to halt the progression of HS, escalating treatments in a commensurate manner with symptom and disease burden. Effective therapies, both currently available and those in development, offer improved outcomes for people with HS.^{14,15} The AAD supports research endeavors that deepen understanding of HS therapies and management, ultimately enhancing the ability to provide exemplary care.
- B) Advocate for Access to Evidence-Based Treatments:** While up to 68% of patients with HS experience moderate to severe disease, there is a concerning trend of low biologic prescription rates.¹⁶ Despite being among the most effective therapies for HS, the underutilization of biologics underscores the need for heightened awareness, advocacy, and improved access to evidence-based treatments for individuals with HS.
- C) Increase Awareness:** In alignment with the AAD's commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, it is crucial to acknowledge the disproportionate and catastrophic impact of HS on underserved communities. To address this, supporting and prioritizing initiatives to advance knowledge and care for HS becomes paramount. This includes not only research and clinical efforts but also a concerted focus on increasing awareness of HS in both medical and lay communities. By fostering understanding and recognition of HS symptoms, we lay the groundwork for early detection, timely intervention, and improved healthcare outcomes, particularly benefiting individuals in marginalized and underserved populations.
- D) Reduce Burden on Acute Care Services.** Expanded ambulatory access to medical and procedure-based treatments may reduce healthcare utilization costs by minimizing the need for acute care visits, emergency interventions, and hospitalizations.

This Position Statement is provided for educational and informational purposes only. It is intended to offer physicians guiding principles and policies regarding the practice of dermatology. This Position Statement is not intended to establish a legal or medical standard of care. Physicians should use their personal and professional judgment in interpreting these guidelines and applying them to the particular circumstances of their individual practice arrangements.

E) Facilitate Collaborative Multidisciplinary Care: While dermatologists may not be the primary managers of pain and systemic comorbid conditions, they play a critical role in advocating for comprehensive and multidisciplinary care strategies that improve patients' overall health and wellness.¹⁷ Collaborative efforts involving mental health professionals and interdisciplinary experts are paramount to addressing the multifaceted impacts of HS.

In conclusion, the AAD's commitment to accessible and comprehensive care for people with HS is not only resolute but integral to the goals of the AAD. By emphasizing timely and affordable interventions, evidence-based treatments, and interdisciplinary collaboration, the AAD aims to improve the overall well-being and quality of life of people with HS.

References

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