



FIGHTING PRESCRIPTION DRUG ABUSE

Rx Prescribing Guidelines

Although opioids (prescription pain medications) were originally intended to help people live with chronic pain, their use and abuse have soared, leading to a dramatic rise in unintentional overdoses in Ohio and across the country.

Per capita dosage of opioids increased in Ohio from 7 pills in 1997 to 67 pills in 2011 for every man, woman and child. The number of Ohioans who died from a drug overdose spiraled from 327 lives in 1999 to 1,765 in 2011 – a 440 percent increase – and equivalent to nearly 5 Ohioans every day. Prescription drugs are involved in most unintentional drug overdoses and have largely driven the rise in deaths. Opioids are the largest contributor to this epidemic; they account for more fatal overdoses than any other prescription or illegal drug, including cocaine, heroin and hallucinogens combined.

GOVERNOR'S CABINET OPIATE ACTION TEAM – PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION WORKGROUP

In January 2011, Governor John R. Kasich announced the Governor's Cabinet Opiate Action Team to combat Ohio's public health epidemic of prescription drug abuse, misuse and unintentional overdoses. One of the initiatives that year was the formation of a Professional Education Workgroup composed of clinical professional associations, clinicians specializing in pain management, state professional licensing boards, state agencies and other stakeholders to address how prescribers can reduce misuse, abuse and unintentional overdoses in their approach to prescribing pain medications to their patients.

Under the guidance of Co-Chairs Dr. Ted Wymyslo, Director of the Ohio Department of Health, and Dr. Bonnie K. Burman, Director of the Ohio Department of Aging, the Professional Educational Workgroup rolled out opioid [prescribing guidelines for hospital emergency departments](#) in spring 2012. New opioid prescribing guidelines for all prescribers are being rolled out in October 2013.

The prescribing guidelines have been adopted by State Medical Board of Ohio, Ohio State Dental Board, Ohio Board of Nursing and Ohio Board of Pharmacy.

OVERVIEW – OPIOID PRESCRIBING GUIDELINES FOR ALL PRESCRIBERS

Background: Research shows that patients who receive higher doses of prescribed pain medications are at increased risk for overdose and need close supervision and periodic reevaluation. Prescribed pain medication doses can be calculated as a Morphine Equivalent Daily Dose (MED), and the odds of an overdose at 50 – 99 MED are three times higher than at a dose under 50 MED.

Rx Guidelines: The new opioid prescribing guidelines recommend that 80 milligrams MED for more than three months for patients with chronic, non-terminal pain should trigger the prescriber to reevaluate the effectiveness and safety of the patient's pain management plan. The guidelines are intended to supplement, and not replace, the prescriber's clinical judgment.

New Prescription Reporting Tools: When prescribing an opioid, pharmacists must record the prescription in the online Ohio Automated Rx Reporting System (OARRS). These new guidelines encourage prescribers to use the data in OARRS so that they will know how much pain medication a patient already is receiving, perhaps from multiple prescribers. A new OARRS tool launched with these prescribing guidelines assists prescribers by calculating a patient's opioid prescriptions into a single MED score for comparison to the 80 MED threshold.

Helping Patients Understand Effects of Opiates: Prescribers are strongly advised to optimize therapy and ensure patient safety by reestablishing informed consent, including providing the patient with written information

about the potential adverse effects of long-term opioid therapy; reviewing the patient's functional status; reviewing the patient's progress toward treatment objectives; utilizing OARRS as an additional check on patient compliance; considering a patient pain treatment agreement, including consequences of non-compliance; and considering having the patient evaluated by another provider or specialist.

Online Resources for Prescribers: The Professional Education Workgroup developed a prescriber-focused website – opioidprescribing.ohio.gov – to help prescribers learn more about the guidelines. The site also includes resources prescribers can use to incorporate the guidelines into their daily practice; a continuing education video education module, a toolkit and patient resources.

METRICS

From October through December 2013, clinical professional associations and all members of the Professional Education Workgroup will educate clinicians about the new opioid prescribing guidelines. Starting in January 2014, the Professional Education Workgroup will begin assessing the effectiveness of the prescriber guidelines based on established measures and processes.

COLLABORATION

The new opioid prescribing guidelines were developed through the collaboration of clinical professional associations, clinicians specializing in pain management, state professional licensing boards, state agencies and other stakeholders.

- Academy of Medicine of Cleveland and Northern Ohio
- Academy of Senior Health Sciences
- ADAMHS Board of Cuyahoga Co.
- Columbus Public Health
- Council for Ohio Health Care Advocacy
- Center for Symptom Relief / Doctor's Hospital, Columbus
- Emergency Services, Inc.
- Hospice of Dayton
- Midwest Care Alliance
- Ohio Academy of Family Physicians
- Ohio Association of Advanced Practice Nurses
- Ohio Association of County Behavioral Health Authorities
- Ohio Association of Health Commissioners
- Ohio Association of Physician Assistants
- Ohio Board of Nursing
- Ohio Board of Pharmacy
- Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation
- Ohio Chapter, American College of Emergency Physicians
- Ohio Council of Deans & Directors of Baccalaureate & Higher Degree Nursing Programs
- Ohio Department of Aging
- Ohio Department of Health
- Ohio Department of Medicaid
- Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services
- Ohio Foot and Ankle Medical Association
- Ohio HealthCare Association
- Ohio Health-Grant Medical Center
- Ohio Hospice & Palliative Care Association
- Ohio Hospital Association
- Ohio KePro
- Ohio Nurses Association and the MedOhio District Nurses Association
- Ohio Osteopathic Association
- Ohio Pain Initiative
- Ohio Optometry Board
- Ohio Pharmacists Association
- Ohio Poison Control Collaborative/Cincinnati DPIC
- Ohio Society of Anesthesiologists
- Ohio State Board of Optometry
- Ohio State Dental Board
- Ohio State Medical Association
- OSU College of Dentistry
- OSU College of Nursing
- OSU Medical Center
- Scioto County Health Department
- State Medical Board of Ohio