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Prescribing Opioids

The overuse of prescription opioids has become a national epidemic. Nationally, among new heroin users, about three out of four report abusing prescription opioids before using heroin. According to the 2013 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), about 0.8% of Washoe County adult residents used a pain killer such as Vicodin, Oxycontin or Percocet to get high at least once within the previous 30 days. This would equate to about 3,600 persons per year and has likely increased since 2013. This issue of the Epi-News will offer resources to assist you in addressing this critical issue with your patients including:

- Strategies for assisting high-risk patients
- Medication-assisted treatment certification programs
- Local addiction recovery services locator
- Information about PMP (Nevada's prescription drug monitoring program)
- Opioid prescribing guidelines
- Opioid prescriber resource sheet

Please see the sections below for brief descriptions on each topic. On the second page you will find links to obtain more detailed information.

Don't "Fire" Your Patients Who May Be Over-using Opioids

Clearly providing safe and effective pain management can be challenging. There are multiple complexities to be considered in pain management when treating patients with any type of pain. One of the most difficult situations for prescribers may be how to respond to patients who have opioid substance use disorder or symptoms of addiction. Hopefully, these resources can help you maintain your clinical relationship with your patients who need help with any opioid use disorder and improve their overall well-being. These patients may need your assistance now more than ever.

Clinician Tools for Assisting Patients on Opioids

Patients on high doses of opioids (over 120 morphine equivalents) are at increased risk of overdose and diminishing function. Tapering a patient, weaning them from higher Opioid doses, can be an important first step to reducing overdose risk and improving function. It is also helpful to maintain ongoing communication with your patient about your concern for their wellbeing and your commitment to safe prescribing. A variety of tools are available on the prescriber resource sheet link (below) including a tapering pocket guide, an opioid overdose toolkit, and more.

Medication-Assisted Treatment

When addiction is confirmed, the use of medication-assisted treatment (MAT), such as buprenorphine has proven highly effective in lowering overdose risk, decreasing risk for HIV and hepatitis C, and increasing patient retention in treatment. If you are not already certified to prescribe buprenorphine, consider obtaining a certification. There are several online MAT training programs available for prescribers.

Referral and Treatment Service Locators

If you are unable to provide medication assisted treatment yourself, refer patients to an opioid treatment program or other drug recovery program within the community. Access to more information about local addiction recovery services is readily available.

Prescription Drug Monitoring Program – Nevada AWARD

An important tool for identifying patients at risk is the State Prescription Monitoring Program (PMP) titled Nevada AWARD. The PMP can be accessed relatively easily through registration with the Board of Pharmacy. Checking Nevada AWARD before any initial prescription and every 90 days thereafter is required by law.

Prescribing Guidelines for Opioids and Controlled Substance for Pain

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines provide information about best practices for prescribing opioid, options for non-pharmacological treatment of pain symptoms, along with recommendations for those patients presenting with symptoms of addiction. Abbreviated versions of these guidelines are also available.

To access the above mentioned resources and tools please see the following links

Clinician Tools

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

[Clinical Tools](#) (Opioid Prescribing Guidelines Mobile App, Checklist, Non-opioid Treatments, Assessing Benefits and Harm, Calculating Dosage, and more)
[CDC Tapering Pocket Guide](#)

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

[FREE MAT Treatment of Opioids Use Disorder Pocket Guide](#)
[Opioid Overdose Toolkit](#)

US Department of Veteran's Affairs (VA)

[Opioid Use Disorder – A VA Clinician's Guide to Identification and Management of Opioid Use Disorder \(2016\)](#)

Medication-Assisted Treatment Resources

[American Society of Addiction Medicine \(ASAM\)](#)
[SAMHSA MAT Certification and Training Programs](#)
[SAMHSA – Apply for OTP Certification](#)
[SAMHSA – Training Materials and Resources](#)

(Buprenorphine Training for Physicians, Opioid Prescribing Courses for Physicians, Webinar, Workshops, Publications and Research)

[The American Osteopathic Academy of Addition Medicine \(AOAAM\) Clinical Tools](#)

(Buprenorphine information for patients and families, sample intake questionnaire, consent for release, sample treatment agreements, Clinical opiate withdrawal scale and more)

Treatment Services Locator

[National Alliance of Advocates for Buprenorphine Treatment \(NAABT\) Patient/Provider Matching System](#)
[SAMHSA's MAT of Substance Use Disorder – Opioid Treatment Program Directory by State](#)
[SAMHSA's Buprenorphine Treatment Physician Locator](#)
[SAMHSA's Treatment Services Locator](#)

Prescription Drug Monitoring Program

[Nevada Prescription Monitoring Program – PMP AWAR₃E](#)

Prescribing Guidelines

[CDC Guideline for Prescribing Opioids for Chronic Pain](#)

Related Publications

[ASAM/s Clinical Guidelines for the Use of Buprenorphine in the Treatment of Opioid Addiction](#)
[ASAM's Medication-Assisted Treatment for Opioid Addiction in Opioid Treatment Programs](#)
[Managing Pain Safely: Multiple Interventions to Dramatically Reduce Opioid Overuse](#)

Opioid Overdose Prevention Websites

[PROJECT ECHO from University of Nevada Reno \(Ongoing CME opportunities on various topics\)](#)
[Center for the Application of Substance Abuse Technologies \(CASAT\) from University of Nevada Reno \(Continuing education opportunities on the topic of substance abuse\)](#)
[Governor Sandoval's 2016 Rx Drug Abuse Summit Summary](#)

Healthcare prescribers are essential partners in ending this epidemic. Working together, we want to ensure that Washoe County prescribers have access to resources and support to help improve patient pain management, while avoiding opioid overdose and addiction. Thank you for providing quality medical care to your patients in need of effective pain management.

The Washoe County Health District would like to thank the Southern Nevada Health District for developing the information and researching the hyperlinks contained in this issue of the Epi-News.

MANAGING CHRONIC PAIN IS COMPLEX, BUT ACCESSING PRESCRIBING GUIDANCE HAS NEVER BEEN EASIER.

Download the free Opioid Guide App today!
www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/prescribing/app.html



Available on the App Store

ANDROID APP ON Google play

This App, including the calculator, is not intended to replace clinical judgment. Always consider the individual clinical circumstances of each patient.