Physician Fact Sheet

Physician/Prescriber Reminders When Prescribing Opioids

Before Prescribing Opioids, Remember to

✓ CHECK the Massachusetts Prescription Awareness Tool (MassPAT).*

✓ DETERMINE goals of using prescription opioids.

✓ DO a Risk Assessment. If the patient is at risk for misuse or substance use disorder, make a plan to address and/or mitigate risks. Be sure benefits of opioid therapy outweigh potential risks.

✓ PRESCRIBE for no longer than seven days for any first-time prescription unless an exception applies. Within the Emergency Department prescribe for no longer than five days. Any exceptions must be documented in the medical record.* Prescribe the lowest dose for the least number of days.

✓ EXPLAIN the expected benefits, side effects, risks, and important safety measures to patients (and caregiver if necessary).*

✓ DISCUSS the amount prescribed, appropriate dosing, and the option to fill a lesser amount.*

✓ DOCUMENT in the medical record: goals, exceptions and reasons, patient education, and treatment plan.*

✓ TAKE special precautions when prescribing long-term opioid therapy. Check the Opioid Prescribing Guidelines adopted by the Massachusetts Board of Registration in Medicine.

Some Considerations

• Consult with a pain specialist as deemed clinically appropriate by the treating prescriber.

• Prescribers must enter into a pain management agreement with patients when prescribing extended-release long-acting opioids in non-abuse deterrent form.*

• Prescribers should consider entering into a pain management agreement for patients who are being prescribed opioids for long-term pain management, as the treating provider determines to be clinically appropriate.

• Consider co-prescribing Naloxone for patients on long-term opioid therapy.

✓ PLAN follow-up.

* Required by MA State Law