Physician Fact Sheet

Physician/Prescriber Reminders when Prescribing Opioids

Before Prescribing Opioids, Remember to

✓ CHECK your state’s prescription monitoring program.
✓ 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 the lowest dose for the least number of days. Typically, 3–5 days for most acute conditions, infrequently more than 7 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.

Some Considerations

• Consult with a pain specialist as deemed clinically appropriate by the treating prescriber.
• Prescribers should consider entering 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.

The Physician Fact Sheet is available at www.massmed.org/opioidprescriberfactsheetext.