



Larry Hogan, Governor · Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor · Robert R. Neall, Secretary

May 18, 2020

Dear Maryland Clinician:

The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) commends practitioners across the state for success in improving opioid prescribing practices. Maryland, as well as the rest of the country, continues to feel the complex and evolving consequences of opioid misuse. There is an important balance between reducing the very real health risks of opioids with the equally real needs of patients suffering from pain. The following updates are provided with this message:

- Introduction to the Office of Provider Engagement and Regulation
- New clinical guidance on effective opioid tapering practices
- New naloxone co-prescribing regulations
- New educational opportunity for health care practitioners: academic detailing
- Reporting updates to the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program

Office of Provider Engagement and Regulation

The new Office of Provider Engagement and Regulation (OPER) provides multidisciplinary support for prescribers and pharmacists by promoting professional education, informed clinical decision-making, best practices and innovation in connection with therapies involving controlled dangerous substances (CDS). OPER consists of the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP) and the Office of Controlled Substances Administration (OCSA), the state CDS permit authority.

Clinical guidance from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) on Opioid Tapering Practices

Clinicians are encouraged to reference the *Guide for Appropriate Tapering or Discontinuation of Long-Term Opioid Use*, published by HHS, for guidance on safe and effective tapering practices and discontinuation of opioid therapy. See enclosed document for additional information.

Naloxone Co-Prescribing

Certain patients are at elevated risk of experiencing or witnessing an opioid overdose. Newly promulgated Maryland regulations (COMAR 10.13.03) support the co-prescribing of naloxone, the opioid overdose reversal agent, to these patients. See attached fact sheet for additional information.

Maryland Opioid Academic Detailing Project

The Maryland Opioid Academic Detailing Project, managed by MDH, offers evidence-based information to support therapeutic decisions specific to pain management and substance use disorder. Academic detailers are trained public health professionals who offer brief visits with practitioners to discuss their needs in prescribing CDS, supporting patients with pain management needs, and referring or offering substance use disorder treatment. Academic detailers connect practitioners with evidence-based, clinically relevant and actionable resources offered by their local health department, MDH, and federal health agencies. If you are interested in receiving a visit from an academic detailer or would like to learn more, please email MDH.PDMP@maryland.gov.

PDMP Data Reporting Updates

The PDMP collects and provides information to registered users on all Schedule II-V CDS prescriptions filled in Maryland. Maryland law generally requires all prescribers to refer to the patient's PDMP history prior to issuing a CDS prescription. Maryland law also generally requires all dispensers to report dispensed prescription data to the PDMP within 24 hours. This statutory requirement applies to pharmacies as well as practitioners dispensing CDS in an office setting. To ensure compliance with this requirement, and for information on the frequency and method of data reporting, please see the enclosed notice.

The misuse of both prescription and illicit opioids continues to pose a significant burden of preventable morbidity and mortality in Maryland. The Maryland Department of Health values your partnership in addressing this public health priority.

For more information regarding any aspect of CDS prescribing or dispensing, contact the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program or the Office of the Controlled Substances Administration.

Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP)

Email: mdh.pdmp@maryland.gov
Phone: 410-402-8686

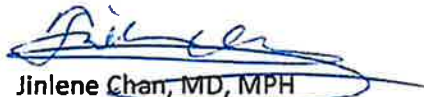
Office of Controlled Substances Administration (OCSA)

Email: Maryland.OCSA@maryland.gov
Phone: 410-764-2890

Sincerely,



Robert R. Neall
Secretary



Jinlene Chan, MD, MPH
Assistant Secretary
Chief Medical Officer