

Massachusetts Emergency Department Opioid Management Policy

PROVIDER INSTRUCTIONS ONLY – DO NOT HAND OUT

Patient Information Sheet

At the request of the Massachusetts Hospital Association (MHA) Substance Use Disorder Prevention and Treatment Task Force, the attached document was developed to assist Emergency Department (ED) clinicians with educating patients who come to the ED (especially those seeking an opioid prescription pain medication) about the scope and reasons behind the policy's creation.

MHA has produced this document which your facility can customize, change, or add your hospital's logo and contact information.

Due to legal EMTALA concerns that could arise with using this policy, MHA worked with outside legal counsel to develop these instructions to ensure that any such use of the documents that the task force developed do not trigger a regulatory review. To that end, we encourage hospitals to work with their legal counsels to consider when to provide this patient information sheet during patient encounters.

- Neither the ED Opioid Management Policy nor the patient information sheet should be posted in a hospital patient waiting room, triage area, or patient treatment room;
- The documents should only be provided to a patient in the ED after an appropriate medical screening exam. It may be provided during or after the discussion involving appropriate treatment for stabilization;
- At no time should any document be used in a manner that may coerce, intimidate, or discourage patients, who present to the ED with painful medical conditions, from leaving the ED prior to receiving an appropriate medical screening exam and stabilization;
- Do not let this document be a substitute for an informed decision-making discussion; and
- Be aware of a patient's limited English proficiency needs when communicating or providing this document.

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Patient Information Sheet

The Massachusetts Hospital Association, with assistance from its hospital and physician practice membership, developed a prescription opioid pain medication policy for hospital Emergency Departments (EDs). The policy's purpose is to help reduce the high number of injuries and deaths to people who misuse opioid medications.

Emergency Departments in Massachusetts have agreed to follow a basic set of principles, outlined below, while doing their best to find the right treatment for your illness or condition. If you have any questions about this policy, please contact _____.

Depending on each patient's specific medical condition and need, the ED clinician may:

- 1) Screen patients being considered for an opioid pain medication prescription, for risk of substance use disorder or misuse, and for medication/prescription history, which includes reviewing available databases and/or medical records;
- 2) Share information, if available, with a patient's primary care provider or treatment program about opioid pain medications provided, prescribed, or sought in the ED;
- 3) Discuss the potential risks and benefits of taking certain prescription opioid pain medications, the availability of other alternative treatments, and/or no treatment;
- 4) Limit the prescribing of certain opioid pain medication if such medications are lost, stolen, or destroyed – unless the clinician can verify the prescription with a primary care provider or treatment program; and
- 5) Limit the dosage of prescription opioid pain medications to, at most, five days.

The **general risks of using opioid pain medications** include, but are not limited to:

- Developing tolerance, dependence, or addiction;
- Withdrawal symptoms;
- Overdoses that can lead to slowed/stopped breathing, which can cause disability or death;
- Drowsiness or other impairments to the operation of vehicles and machinery, which can lead to injury; and
- Interactions with other drugs that may enhance or intensify the effects of opioids and/or increase the risk of overdose.

If you receive a prescription for opioid pain medications from this ED, please:

- Store the medications securely;
- Do Not share them with others;
- Do Not use the medications for non-medical purposes;
- Do Not combine opioid medications with other sedating substances;
- Take the medication only as directed;
- Dispose of any leftover medication properly; and
- Schedule a follow-up appointment with your primary care provider (PCP) or, if you do not have a PCP, ask for a list of free clinics in your area.