

Opioid Safety Initiative (OSI)

Department of Veterans Affairs Office of Community Care (OCC)

Objective

The intent of the VA Office of Community Care is to educate and ensure a greater awareness of the evidence-based guidelines for prescribing opioids as outlined in the Opioid Safety Initiative (OSI) to all participating non-VA purchased care providers. To build a collaborative effort between the VA and non-VA purchased care providers promoting evidence-based management of Veterans with chronic pain, improve patient outcomes, and decrease incidence of complications in regards to opioid prescribing.

Introduction

In 2013, a national system-wide effort mandated by Congress, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Department of Defense (DoD), developed and implemented the Opioid Safety Initiative (OSI), a multi-faceted, comprehensive effort to improve Veteran quality of life suffering from chronic pain, to assist in decreasing opioid prescribing practices associated with adverse outcomes, and to promote safer opioid-related prescribing for Veterans. The guidelines were published in February 2017. The OSI addresses the challenge of opioid dependency with an innovative, comprehensive plan that closely monitors VA's dispensing practices system-wide and coordinates pain management to include patient and provider education, testing and tapering programs, and use of complementary integrated health modalities. Ref: www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=2529

Opioid Safety Initiative (OSI)

Management of Opioid Therapy (OT) for Chronic Pain (2017) - VA/DoD Clinical Practice Guidelines

There is a mounting body of research detailing the lack of benefit and potentially severe harm of long-term opioid therapy. Since the publication of the Clinical Practice Guideline for Management of Opioid Therapy for Chronic Pain in 2010, there has been a growing epidemic of opioid misuse and opioid use disorder in America. The 2017 updated guideline is based on a systematic review of both the clinical and epidemiological evidence available as of December 2016.

The guideline was developed by a panel of multidisciplinary experts and it provides a clear explanation of the logical relationships between various care options and health outcomes while rating both the quality of the evidence and the strength of the recommendation. This guideline is intended to provide healthcare providers with a framework by which to evaluate, treat, and manage the individual needs and preferences of patients with chronic pain, who are currently on or are being considered for long-term opioid therapy (LOT).

Link to VA/DoD Clinical Practice Guidelines:

<http://www.healthquality.va.gov/guidelines/Pain/cot/>

Clinical Practice Guidelines

Clinical practice guidelines are used in health care to improve patient care as a potential solution to reduce inappropriate variations in care. Guidelines should be evidence based, incorporate patient input, as well as explicit criteria to ensure internal validity. The use of guidelines must always be in the context of a health care provider's clinical judgment in the care of a particular patient. For this reason, the guidelines may be viewed as an educational tool to provide information in shared decision making.

<https://www.healthquality.va.gov/index.asp>

Key Clinical Information

- **Veterans are twice as likely to die from accidental overdose compared to the non-Veteran population.** Assessment of risk factors is important in our Veteran population especially in returning combat Veterans. Often they present to primary care seeking relief from both physical and psychological pain.
- **Psychological distress may lead to inappropriate use of opioid medications in patients with mental health disorders. Caution should be used in this high risk population.**
- Veterans with Posttraumatic Stress Disorder are more likely to:
 - Be prescribed opioids at higher doses
 - Receive opioids and sedative hypnotics (including benzodiazepines) concurrently
 - Combinations lead to increased risk of unintentional overdose

Chronic Pain Treatment Strategies

- Assessment
- Set Expectations for Pain Management
- Offer Nonpharmacological and Non-opioid treatment options
- Proceed with opioid treatment with caution
- Assess treatment at every visit
- Stop and reassess if you have any concerns
- Refer to Substance abuse treatment teams when necessary

More details to be reviewed in the Opioid Safety-Educational Guide found in the OSI Toolkit

Requirements for the Non-VA community Provider

- Review and sign the receipt of the evidence-based guidelines outlined in the Opioid Safety Initiative (OSI) included within this module.
- With respect to clinical judgement and or contractual requirements, submit all prescribed non-urgent/non-emergent medications in accordance with the VHA National Formulary Handbook to VA for dispensing and as part of the health care treatment authorized by the VA.

Resource Section:

The OSI Toolkit can be found here, each element is listed for your convenience

https://www.va.gov/PAINMANAGEMENT/Opioid_Safety_Initiative_OSI.asp

The Opioid Therapy pocket guide

<https://www.healthquality.va.gov/guidelines/Pain/cot/VADoDOTCPGPocketCard022817.pdf>

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Community Care Provider Opioid Safety Initiative (Section 131)

[← Back](#)

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Community Care Provider Opioid Safety Initiative (Section 131)

[← Back](#)

[🕒 History](#)

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