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BWC Provider eNews



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Chronic-care providers must register with OARRS

One of the most effective tools for prescription-drug safety available today is the Ohio Automated Rx Reporting System (OARRS). An OARRS report offers valuable insight into a patient's use of controlled substances while also alerting providers to possible signs of abuse, addiction or diversion.

Effective Dec. 1, 2013, BWC will no longer reimburse for prescriptions of controlled substances written by Ohio providers not enrolled in OARRS if the prescriptions are for chronic care. Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) * classifies chronic care as meaning the provider has written three or more prescriptions for controlled substances for the same injured worker in a 12-week period.

"This revision to our rule supports the bureau's goal to provide appropriate medications to our injured workers in a safe and efficacious manner," says Pharmacy Programs Director John Hanna. "We want our prescribers to take every available step to prevent the risk of an injured worker accidentally overdosing on his or her medication. Checking the OARRS database is an excellent preventive measure." Register and use [OARRS](#).

*[OAC 4123-6-21 \(3\)](#)

BWC endorses state's opioid prescribing guidelines

BWC fully supports the [state's opioid prescribing guidelines](#) for physicians treating patients with chronic, non-terminal pain. Research that indicates patients who receive higher doses of prescribed pain medications are at an increased risk for addiction or taking an overdose drives the guidelines. Thus, close supervision and periodic re-evaluation of these patients are the mainstays of opioid analgesic management.

“The nature of workplace accidents leads to a high proportion of our patients being prescribed opioids for initial pain treatment,” says Dr. Stephen T. Woods, M.D., BWC's chief medical officer. “We are fully aware of the need to closely monitor our patients on opioids and frequently review their progress toward returning to work.”

How to comply with the new opioid guidelines

When managing opioid analgesics for greater than 12 continuous weeks, prescribers **must**:

- Review and follow the [Ohio Administrative Code Chapter on Drug Treatment of Intractable Pain \(OAC 4731-21\)](#) . Notice the documentation requirements of a thorough **medical evaluation; informed consent; an individualized treatment plan; an evaluation by a specialist** in the body area perceived as the pain source; and a review of the commonly-described **four As of chronic pain treatment**. They are analgesia, activities of daily living, adverse side effects and aberrant drug-taking behaviors;
- Register in the [Ohio Automated Rx Reporting System \(OARRS\)](#) and use the OARRS data.

As a part of the **new guidelines**, prescribers should now also:

- › Use an **80 MED (Morphine Equivalent Dose) per day trigger** to reevaluate the effectiveness and safety of the patient's pain-management plan. Notice how this is a suggested update to OAC 4731-21 language: “amounts or combinations that may not be appropriate when treating other medical conditions.”;
- › Establish a **pain agreement** that includes prescribing parameters and expectations;
- › Perform an opioid risk assessment and consider a urine drug screen when appropriate. Note: OAC 4731-21 requires chart documentation of drug-screen results when obtained;
- › Provide **verbal and written patient education** on the potential adverse effects of **long-term opioid therapy**.

For more info, consider CMEs

Responsible Opioid Prescribing, A Clinician's Guide by Scott M. Fishman, M.D., is available to BWC-certified prescribers along with 7.25 continuing medical education (CME) hours. To request a free copy, please email BWCOhioMed@bwc.state.oh.us. In addition, view www.opioidprescribing.ohio.gov for one free CME hour in a video format.

Note: OAC 4731-21 encourages pain management CMEs.

BWC's pain management initiatives

While the current trigger is 80 MEDs, BWC is considering moving to a 60 MED trigger at six to eight weeks to address our injured worker population where return to work is paramount. Our goal is to use medications as a tool to facilitate medical and vocational recovery rather than chronic opioid use. Share your ideas on managing opioid use in workers' compensation by sending an email to BWCOhioMed@bwc.state.oh.us.

BWC uses new email encryption program to share sensitive data

In November, BWC employees began using an email encryption program called ZixMail to transmit sensitive information to external partners. This email encryption program is a secure and simplified method of sending emails with or without attachments. It eliminates the need to password-protect documents transmitted via email.

When answering an email, do not include sensitive information in the email's subject line because it is not encrypted. Only the body of the email is encrypted with ZixMail. When we send you an image from a claim by RightFax, we will password protect it rather than use ZixMail. In addition, we will also password protect a document when the ZixMail website is unavailable to an external entity due to restrictions. You can securely send a document via fax to a phone number.

If you exchange sensitive information with BWC, you need to establish a free account with ZixMail by creating a login and password. For more information on the ZixMail program, as well as instructions on how to set up and use your ZixMail account, click [here](#).

Ohio

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