



PROVIDER *bulletin*

December 23, 2019

Dear Provider:

Please note the latest safety update. There is concern with gabapentinoid abuse alone and in combination with opioids. The FDA is adding warnings to gabapentin and pregabalin about risks of respiratory problems when used concurrently with opioids and other centrally acting drugs.

The misuse of opioids has been chronicled nationwide. The prevalence is pervasive to all demographics, young and old, rural and urban, male and female, rich and poor, and any other way one wishes to stratify members. The problems can be seen with intentional misuse and unintentional as well.

KFHC wishes to help provide tools to assist in screening and assessing appropriate use of opioids. Please see the CDC's guidelines for reference. More background information and a PDF version may be found at <https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/prescribing/guideline.html>. The CHCF best practice guidelines are also included at the end of this bulletin.

Screening Tools

Common screening tools to assess appropriateness of opioid therapy are attached. Tools to assess the initiation and/or continuation of opioid therapy include: Webster's Opioid Risk Tool (ORT), National Institutes of Drug Abuse (NIDA), Pain Assessment and Documentation Tool (PADT), and Current Opioid Misuse Measure (COMM). Others are available as well. A tool to evaluate the risk of overdose or respiratory depression is the Risk Index for Overdose or Serious Opioid-induced Respiratory Depression (RIOSORD).

Naloxone

Another important element in managing long term opioid use, particularly in higher risk individuals (> 50 MMED, substance use disorder, concurrent benzodiazepine, gabapentinoid, sedative, and other centrally acting medications, other comorbidities, ie. Sleep apnea), is the use of naloxone. This drug is on a carve-out list for KFHC. It is available to our members, the pharmacy bills the state Medi-Cal program instead of KFHC.

Sincerely,

Bruce Wearda, R.Ph.
Director of Pharmacy