



**For Immediate Release**  
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Contact: Elizabeth Hamilton  
Manager, Communications  
[Hamilton@chime.org](mailto:Hamilton@chime.org)  
(203) 294-7216

## **Connecticut Adopts New Opioid Prescribing Guidelines for Emergency Departments**

WALLINGFORD – The Connecticut Hospital Association (CHA), the Connecticut State Medical Society (CSMS), and the Connecticut Chapter of the American College of Emergency Physicians (CCEP) have endorsed an updated set of voluntary opioid prescribing [guidelines](#) to help Emergency Department (ED) medical staff treat patients with chronic pain conditions.

The State Department of Public Health (DPH) was consulted on the drafting of the new guidelines and applauds these efforts.

“DPH appreciates the efforts of our partners at CHA, CSMS, and CCEP to promote best practices for opioid prescribing in Emergency Departments. Stemming the tide of the opioid epidemic here in Connecticut requires collaboration and a concerted commitment at every level. These updated guidelines demonstrate the willingness of hospitals and other providers to collaborate with state agencies to address the opioid epidemic,” said DPH Commissioner Raul Pino, MD.

“Although opioids may be necessary for the treatment of pain – a major symptom of many patients who come to the ED – the improper use of these drugs poses a serious threat to patients and society,” said Jennifer Jackson, CEO, CHA. “Connecticut hospitals recognize that providers have a responsibility to diagnose and treat pain, and they also have a responsibility to minimize the potential for the abuse of opioids. We want to thank hospital leaders, DPH, CSMS, and CCEP for collaborating to ensure that the new opioid prescribing guidelines reflect today’s healthcare landscape.”

The opioid prescribing guidelines were originally issued in 2015 as a tool to help reduce the inappropriate use of opioids while preserving the vital role of hospital EDs in treating patients with emergent medical conditions. They were created through CHA, with the guidance of hospital ED Directors from across Connecticut who recognized the emerging problem of opioid addiction, which is now a statewide and national epidemic. The new guidelines have been updated to reflect changes in state law since 2015.

Specifically, the updated guidelines:

- Lower the recommended dose of prescribed opioids from 30 pills to a three-day supply. This is more restrictive than state law, which limits opioid prescriptions to a seven-day supply for adults and a five-day supply for minors.
- Respond to current clinical recommendations for pain treatment by recommending that alternative, non-opioid therapies be administered or prescribed whenever possible for ED patients.
- Are in accordance with new state laws that:
  - Recommend that ED personnel request and review their patients’ voluntary non-opioid directive form.
  - Specify that opioids be prescribed electronically as a way to increase security.

- Underscore the new requirements for providers to offer patients information on the risk and signs of addiction.
- Remind providers that state law requires them to review a patient's records in the Connecticut Prescription Drug Monitoring Program before prescribing more than a 72-hour supply of a controlled substance.

According to a report released last month by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the number of opioid-related overdoses nationally rose by almost 28 percent between 2015 and 2016. In Connecticut, the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner reported that deaths from accidental drug overdoses exceeded 1,000 last year, for the first time since 2012, the year the state began collecting the data.

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#### **About CHA**

The Connecticut Hospital Association has been dedicated to serving Connecticut's hospitals since 1919. Through state and federal advocacy, CHA represents the interests of Connecticut's hospitals on key healthcare issues in the areas of quality and patient safety, access and coverage, workforce, community health, health equity, and hospital reimbursement.

#### **About the Connecticut State Medical Society**

Founded in 1792, the Connecticut State Medical Society (CSMS) proudly represents physicians and physicians in training across our state.

#### **About The Connecticut College of Emergency Physicians**

The Connecticut College of Emergency Physicians (CCEP) represents more than 450 emergency physicians and residents, staffing hospital Emergency Departments throughout the state. CCEP supports the availability of high-quality emergency medical services to all patients within the state of Connecticut and advocates for our members, our patients and our specialty. CCEP is focused on improving the practice of emergency medicine through outreach, education and research initiatives.