

CHANGES TO OPIOID MONITORING AND PRESCRIBING

On January 1, 2019, new rules passed by the Washington Medical Commission for prescribing opioids went effect. The updated rules are summarized below. More pain management resources are available on the [Medical Commission website](#).

- ★ Prescriptions must not be written for more than is needed for effective pain control. The rules provide specific timelines for each phase of pain; you must document the justification for such a quantity.
- ★ Prescription Monitoring Program (or PMP) checks are required at first refill/renewal, during a pain phase transition and periodically based on the patient's risk level.
- ★ Prescribing opioids must be based on clear documentation of unrelieved pain.

For the purpose of these rules, pain includes acute, perioperative, subacute and chronic. Inappropriate treatment of pain includes non-treatment, under treatment, overtreatment and the continued use of ineffective treatments. Finally, children and adolescent patients should be treated based on their weight, with dosage adjusted accordingly.

What you need to do to prescribe opioids:

- ★ At both the first issuance of an opioid prescription and whenever a patient transitions to another pain phase, give the patient resources regarding the risks associated with opioids as well as the safe storage and disposal of opioids.
- ★ Complete 1 hour of opioid-prescribing CME by the end of your next full CME reporting period after January 1, 2019.

These rules do not apply to palliative, in-patient hospital care, procedural medications and cancer related treatments.

Note about chronic-pain patients:

These rules do not change your ability to prescribe opioids to chronic-pain patients. These rules do not impose a prescribing limit. In fact, you can prescribe up to 120 MED without the need to consult a pain management specialist. As in the [2012 Pain Management Rules](#), when prescribing in excess of 120 MED, first consult with a pain management specialist and document such in the patient record.