

# Opioid Misuse: Educating and Empowering Patients

**Chronic pain affects millions of Americans**, and opioids can provide relief for some patients who sorely need it. Over the past decade there has been a fourfold increase in opioid prescribing<sup>1</sup>. However, that rise coincides with **an increase in unintentional and intentional abuse of opioids**. As a prescriber, one of the most important and challenging situations you face is how to effectively communicate with your patients about the safe use of opioids for chronic pain.

**Did you know?** Opioid misuse has become a national epidemic affecting millions.



The number of hospitalizations involving opioids for Michigan residents increased **120%** between 2000 and 2011.<sup>2</sup>



The opioid-related death rate in Genesee County is **significantly higher** than both the State and national rate.<sup>3</sup>



Genesee County physicians prescribe more opioids per person than most other Michigan counties.<sup>3</sup>

Potential **warning signs** of opioid misuse may include any of the following:

- History of doctor shopping
- Textbook descriptions of symptoms but few details about medical history
- Saying they're visiting friends or relatives and need a prescription
- Request for early refills
- Unusual knowledge of opioids
- Claiming to have lost prescription

Consider the following when **prescribing opioids** to patients:



## Consider a Patient Prescriber Agreement

Helps patients and family members understand the goals of treatment as well as safe use of medications



## Discuss the Safe Use of Opioids

Explain how to take opioids as prescribed and discuss product-specific information about medication prescribed



## Outline the Dangers of Sharing

Sharing opioids is illegal, is a major health risk, and can have dangerous side effects for unintended users



## Explain the Need for Safe Storage

Advise the need for patients to keep opioids in a safe and secure location away from children and others

Brought to you by the Greater Flint Health Coalition's Mental Health & Substance Use Task Force



## References:

1. CDC. (2011). Vital Signs: overdoses of prescription opioid pain relievers—United States, 1999–2008. *MMWR*;60:1487–92.
2. MDCH. Opioid related hospitalizations in Michigan, 2000–2011. *Office of Recovery Oriented Systems of Care, Division for Vital Records and Health Statistics, and Bureau of Disease Control, Prevention, and Epidemiology*.
3. MDCH. (2014). The Profile of Drug Overdose Deaths Using the Michigan Automated Prescription System (MAPS). *Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities Administration*, 16.