

Keep Us Healthy... Prevent Prescription Drug Abuse



Prescription Opioid Abuse

- Prescription opiate-based drugs, such as oxycontin and vicodin, used to help manage chronic pain can be habit forming and have seen increases in abuse across all demographics.
- Opioids are controlled substances that require a prescription to obtain, users and sellers will attempt to obtain the drugs from their doctor or multiple doctors.
- The majority of opioid users will not become addicted or sell their prescriptions; however other underlying issues may make a patient appear to be abusing their prescriptions.

Issues with identifying opioid abuse

- Native Americans as a group have high rates of depression, which can present as chronic pain that would not be detected by clinical tests for pain. These patients will look like they are abusing their prescriptions due to the un-diagnosable pain but are really in need of mental health assistance.
- Drug seeking behavior may be caused by the economical gain of selling the opioids. Screening opioid patients to see if the drugs are in their system can identify if they are taking their prescriptions or if they may be selling them.
- While opioids can be effective in managing pain, research has shown that long-term usage can decrease the patient's pain tolerance, which will lead to them to use more and attempt to obtain more opioids.
- Non-opioid pain management techniques are the best way to reduce the issue of opioid abuse such as counseling to help patients cope with their pain, stress reduction techniques such as meditation or any exercise that they are able to comfortably perform, or non-prescription medical interventions such as nerve blocks or surgery.