What Am I Needed?

Prescription drug misuse, abuse, and accidental overdose are on the rise.

Pharmacists are in a position to educate the public about potential dangers of opioid medications.

Pharmacists are in a position to educate their clients about proper use, storage, and disposal of controlled medications.

Pharmacists are in a position to alert prescribers about drug interactions that could put individuals at risk for accidental opioid overdose.

Pharmacists are in a position to notify prescribers about possible aberrant behaviors like “doctor shopping” or consistently early refills based on refill history or a Controlled Substance Reporting System (CSRS) and Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP).

Pharmacists are liaisons between medical providers and the public. They can provide education and information in both directions to help maintain safety for individuals that require opioid therapy to maintain quality of life.

What Do I Need to Know?

Opioids are analgesics that can improve pain and function in individuals with chronic pain from many conditions. However, prescription drug overdose is the fastest growing cause of accidental death in North Carolina and the United States, surpassing automobile accidents. The combination of opioids and benzodiazepines (and many other drugs that may alter the clearance of opioids) significantly increases the risk of accidental overdose.

Many patients see more than one provider and these providers are often unaware of all medications that are being prescribed. Naloxone, the antidote for opioid overdose, can be dispensed on a provider’s prescription to patients who are at increased risk for opioid overdose because of age, opioid dosage, drug-drug interactions, or specific disease states.
What Needs To Be Done?

It will take involvement of the entire medical community and the public working together to impact the devastating results of accidental opioid overdose that is being witnessed nationwide.

- Build awareness of the growing problem of prescription drug overdose.
- Educate patients on the potential for adverse effects of opioids including respiratory depression and death.
- Educate patients on signs and symptoms of overdose and appropriate actions to take.
- Educate patients on safe storage and disposal of controlled medications. Make lock boxes available for purchase.
- Display information on pill take back days and locations of take back boxes.
- Check for drug-drug interactions that could increase the risk of accidental overdose and report those interactions to the prescriber.
- Be aware of current diversion and forgery techniques.
- Be aware of and use the CSRS or PDMP to identify patients who may be filling controlled medications at multiple pharmacies, which would raise the concern for misuse or diversion.
- Have naloxone available for dispensing upon written prescription.
- **Take Correctly, Store Securely, Dispose Properly, Never Share.**

Resources

Read more about the NC Good Samaritan Law & Naloxone Legislation here:


http://www.ncdhhs.gov/mhddsas/controlledsubstance/

For more information visit

projectlazarus.org

or call

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