



CMC takes steps as state's new opioid rules come into effect

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MANCHESTER - With the state's new opioid prescribing rules to take effect Sunday, Jan. 1, health care professionals are getting ready to adjust the way they prescribe manage and approach opioid therapy.

According to Catholic Medical Center in Manchester, it has been putting tools in place to be ready for the change.

New measures at CMC include a patient education document that describes the most common risks and side-effects of an opioid, tools that make it easier for providers to document their compliance with the rules, an opioid prescribing form that contains links to the resources providers may need and a pop-up compliance reminder that is triggered when a patient is discharged with an opioid prescription.

According to a prepared statement from CMC, "These changes will help identify people suffering from addiction and community resources are being developed to meet their needs."

By New Hampshire statute, the boards of Medicine, Nursing, Dental Examiners, Optometry, Naturopathic Examiners, Veterinary Medicine and Podiatry were all required to establish opioid prescribing rules.

“Patients throughout New Hampshire can expect to encounter the guidelines when seeking relief from acute or chronic pain for themselves or someone in their care,” said Dr. William Goodman, CMC’s chief medical officer.

Depending on the circumstances, a prescriber may be required to complete a risk-assessment tool to determine whether the patient is appropriate for opioids, provide a written consent document informing the patient of the risks associated with opioids and use a written treatment agreement outlining the responsibilities of both the patient and the prescriber.

Patients treated with opioids for acute pain must be prescribed the lowest effective dose. Those treated for chronic pain for longer than 90 days may be required to undergo random, periodic urine drug-testing to ensure they are benefiting from the pain medication. In emergency departments, urgent care and walk-in clinics, prescribers can not write an opioid prescription for longer than seven days.

Every prescriber in the state will be required to use the New Hampshire Prescription Data Monitoring Program (PDMP), a database that tracks opioid prescribing patterns in New Hampshire and surrounding states, prior to giving a patient their initial opioid prescription.

“While more accountability in prescribing practices is well overdue, the new rules add several steps and considerations for providers prescribing an opioid. CMC has worked to make this as clear and simple as possible for its providers and patients,” Goodman said.

CMC is joining with Elliot Hospital and Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center to host an education session at the end of January at the Manchester Public Health Department.