



KMS Principles on Opioid Misuse

Opioids can be very effective medications for managing pain, particularly associated with cancer and palliative care, as well as for acute pain associated with injuries or surgery. The use of opioids may also be appropriate for chronic, non-cancer related pain. As state policymakers consider how best to balance the public health concerns over the misuse of prescription opioids with the responsibility to ensure access to appropriate pain management, the Kansas Medical Society supports the following guiding principles:

- Accurately assessing and effectively and safely treating patients is the goal and responsibility of every physician. Physicians are in the best position to make clinical judgments about their individual patients' needs. Statutory or other prescribing limitations fail to account for a patient's unique medical condition.
- Standards of care and clinical guidelines should be established by physicians, enforced by the Board of Healing Arts and informed by recent and relevant scientific study.
- Prescribers who hold a federal DEA registration to prescribe opioids and other controlled substances should receive specialty-appropriate, evidence-based continuing education on the management and treatment of pain, prescription drug diversion, misuse and addiction, and strategies clinicians can take in their practice to minimize the incidence of drug misuse.
- Clear, comprehensive and balanced patient education on the management of pain, including the benefits and risks of opioid prescription drugs should be provided by prescribers, dispensers and the Kansas Department of Health and Environment.
- Policies aimed at addressing opioid misuse should be developed with state-specific data.
- The State's Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (K-TRACS), established with the support of Kansas physicians in 2008 to provide accurate and timely information regarding controlled substances, should continue to be provider-led in order to remain an effective resource for clinicians.
- The state should provide support for community-based initiatives such as prescription "take-back" programs in order to mitigate the availability of unused opioid prescriptions.

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