
Narcotics Strategy

August 27, 2010

Ontario is launching a new strategy to address abuse of prescription narcotics and other controlled substances, and to ensure their safe and appropriate use by those who require pain management medication.

There are five key elements to this strategy:

1. Proposed narcotics tracking system

- New legislation would, if passed, enable the province to collect and analyze information on all prescription narcotics and other controlled substances dispensed in Ontario.
- This database would allow for monitoring and analysis of this information for the purpose of flagging problematic patterns in use, prescribing and dispensing.
- In instances of inappropriate or excessive prescribing or dispensing, responses could include educational support and resources, reporting to the appropriate regulatory college and in extreme circumstances, law enforcement.

2. Partnering with the health care sector to educate on appropriate prescribing

- Working with the medical regulatory colleges to develop educational and training initiatives on pain management and appropriate prescribing practices.
- Supporting awareness of the Canadian Guideline for Safe and Effective Use of Opioids for Chronic Non-Cancer Pain, recently released by the National Opioid Use Guideline Group.
- Providing awareness of resources currently available, such as the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health's Addiction Clinical Consultation Service (ACCS), which provides health professionals with advice and support related to the management of addiction problems, drug interactions and related counseling.

3. Partnering with the health care sector to educate on appropriate dispensing

- Working with the pharmacy regulatory colleges to develop educational and training initiatives on appropriate dispensing practices.
- Continuing regular inspections of pharmacies that dispense a high rate of narcotics.
- Supporting a program for the safe disposal of pain medications to ensure their proper disposal, and to reduce the diversion of narcotics to inappropriate uses.

4. Educate to prevent excessive use of prescription narcotics

- Providing more education to patients who require pain management medication about the safe and appropriate use of prescription narcotics and other controlled substances.
- Raising awareness of the risks associated with the use of prescription narcotics and other controlled substances when not prescribed by a doctor -- especially among young people.

5. Addiction Treatment

Ontario's Narcotics Strategy will:

- Focus on treating patients with addiction.
- Investigate additional options for treating and supporting those addicted to prescription narcotics and controlled substances.
- Develop educational workshops on the treatment of narcotics dependence.
- Support the work with relevant partner treatment and addiction organizations and agencies, including the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health and ConnexOntario.

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