

OREGON BOARD OF PHARMACY POSITION STATEMENT

Treatment and Management of Pain

Adopted June 2006

Healthcare leaders and patient advocates have come together in a legislatively mandated pain commission to work toward providing well managed and adequate pain control to the citizens of Oregon. Involvement with The Oregon Pain Commission has prompted the Board of Pharmacy to take a leadership role in promoting the effective management of pain for the state's citizens. The mission of the Oregon Board of Pharmacy is to promote, preserve and protect the public health, safety and welfare by regulating the practice of pharmacy and the distribution of drugs within and into the state. As a part of that endeavor, the Board strives to ensure that all Oregonians have access to appropriate pain relief. Appropriate and effective pain therapies, including the use of controlled substance medications, can greatly improve a patient's quality of life and reduce unnecessary morbidity and cost associated with inadequate treatment of pain.

Inadequate pain control, in some cases, may result from a lack of knowledge or understanding of proper pain management by health care professionals and patients. Under-treatment of pain can also be the result of fear or misunderstanding of the position of regulatory boards or law enforcement agencies regarding the use of controlled substances in the treatment and management of pain. This statement is intended to clarify the Board of Pharmacy's position regarding pain management in the practice of pharmacy.

The Oregon Board of Pharmacy recognizes that the use of controlled substances, including opioid analgesics, is often essential for the treatment and management of both acute and chronic pain of any origin. A pharmacist involved in the care of a patient undergoing treatment for pain should not fear disciplinary action from the board for dispensing controlled substances, including opioid analgesics, for a legitimate medical purpose as defined in the state of Oregon. Pharmacists' involvement with pain management in the usual course of their professional practice should be based upon accepted scientific knowledge and sound clinical judgment.

The Board of Pharmacy also recognizes that controlled substances, by their nature, carry with them a risk of abuse or misuse. All health care professionals must remain alert to the fact that these drugs are subject to abuse and that some people will seek them for inappropriate uses. Care must be taken to balance this risk with the desired outcome of effective pain control for all who are in need.

Dispensing of controlled substances for the treatment of pain must be based upon a valid prescription issued within currently accepted standards. All pharmacists are encouraged to increase their knowledge of current medical standards for the treatment of pain and develop effective strategies for delivering pharmaceutical care to patients suffering with pain. Pharmacists should actively participate on the health care team by providing expertise to the patient, physician, nurse and hospice provider or other care giver. As a member of the health care team, pharmacists can contribute to positive therapeutic outcomes for patients suffering from pain and can reduce the potential for drug abuse. Detailed documentation of the patient's medical condition and clinical response to treatment provides the strongest foundation for providing optimal patient care.

The Board acknowledges the review of position statements from the Iowa, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Texas Boards of Pharmacy as well as the Oregon Board of Nursing and the Oregon Board of Medical Examiners and the Oregon Pain Commission in developing this Position Statement on the Treatment and Management of Pain.