



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
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Department of Public Health  
Board of Registration in Pharmacy  
Division of Health Professions Licensure  
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March 1, 2017

To: Massachusetts Pharmacy Registrants

From: Board of Registration in Pharmacy

Re: DPH Pamphlet for CII and CIII narcotic dispensing [UPDATED from September 23, 2015]

Pursuant to Section 25 of Chapter 52 of the Acts of 2016, Section 21 of Chapter 94C of the Massachusetts General Laws was amended and language was added related to the “Opioid Prescription Drug Fact Sheet.” The amended Section 21 of Chapter 94C reads [with emphasis to note the added language]:

“The department of public health shall produce and distribute either in written or electronic form to pharmacies, not including institutional pharmacies, pamphlets for consumers relative to narcotic drugs, **specifically opiates**, that includes educational information about: (i) pain management; (ii) misuse and abuse by adults and children; (iii) risk of dependency and addiction; (iv) proper storage and disposal; (v) addiction support and treatment resources; and (vi) the telephone helpline operated by the bureau of substance abuse services established in section 18 of chapter 17. A pharmacist shall distribute the pamphlet when dispensing a narcotic or controlled substance contained in Schedule II or III.”

Below please find the above referenced pamphlet “*Opioid Prescription Drug Fact Sheet*.” Please note that this pamphlet is required to be distributed with each dispensing of a Schedule II and III narcotic, specifically opiate, medication.



# Treating Pain and Avoiding Narcotics Misuse

## Suffering from pain?

Your treatment should start with an examination from your health care provider, and a discussion about your pain history, current conditions, and the medications you take. This allows your provider to create a plan that is specific to you, and lowers the risk of side effects or complications of medication, including misuse. You are getting this information because your plan includes a prescription for narcotics. The drugs prescribed are based on factors including the type, location, origin, and severity of your pain. While narcotics may be safe in certain doses, close medical supervision is required for long-term treatment.

## Overdose Risk and How to Stay Safe

Misuse of prescription painkillers can slow breathing to the point of death. Naloxone (also known as Narcan®) blocks the effect of opioids and restores normal breathing and consciousness. It can easily be administered by being sprayed into the nose or given as an injection.

If you plan to keep opioids in your home you should talk to your doctor or pharmacist about the benefits of keeping Naloxone in your home. Naloxone may be available at your pharmacy through a standing take-home order, which means you may be able to obtain it today without a prescription.

## Misuse and Abuse of Prescription Drugs

Prescription drug abuse is an epidemic in the United States. Drug overdoses now cause more deaths than motor vehicle accidents.

The misuse or abuse of opioids can have serious consequences including, lack of energy, inability to concentrate, physical weakness, nausea and vomiting, and suppression of breathing. What's more, your body may become used to a certain dose, potentially leading to addiction.

## How to Safely Use, Store, and Dispose of Narcotic Medications

**USE:** *Take only as directed by your health care provider.* Do not share your medication with anyone, even if their symptoms are the same. Sharing your opioid prescription with another person is illegal and could endanger their health.

**STORE:** *Store opioids securely*, such as in a locked medicine cabinet or a lock box. Medications should be kept dry and stored at room temperature.

**DISPOSE:** *Unused prescriptions are best disposed of in prescription drug drop boxes*, located in many communities. More information is available at [mass.gov/drugdropbox](http://mass.gov/drugdropbox). If you can't get to a drop box, federal guidelines suggest taking unused prescription drugs out of their original containers, mixing them with coffee grounds or kitty litter and throwing them away in a sealed container. Never flush prescription drugs down the toilet unless the label or information sheet says to do so.

## MA Substance Abuse Information and Education Helpline

Toll Free: 800-327-5050

TTY: 800-439-2370

[www.helpline-online.com](http://www.helpline-online.com)

## **Misuse and Abuse of Prescription Drugs among Youth**

The *National Survey on Drug Use and Health* found that young people aged 12 or older who used painkillers (that were not prescribed for them) got them most often from a friend or relative. Show your children how to be safe and responsible by your own actions. Know what you are taking and take it as prescribed. Talk to your children about how dangerous prescription drugs can be, and be clear that they should not use anyone else's medications. If they have to take medicine during the school day, coordinate this with the school nurse or principal. Don't give them medicine to take on their own.

## **How to Seek Help for Addiction to Prescription Drugs**

For Youth and Young Adults (up to age 24):

Massachusetts Central Intake & Care Coordination:

Toll Free: 866-705-2807 / 617-661-3991

TTY: 617-661-9051

For Pregnant Women:

Massachusetts Central Intake & Care Coordination:

Toll Free: 866-705-2807 / 617-661-3991

TTY: 617-661-9051

For All Massachusetts Residents – Information and Referrals for Substance Abuse Services:

The Massachusetts Substance Abuse Information and Education Helpline provides free and confidential information and referrals for alcohol and other drug abuse problems and related concerns. Open Monday to Friday from 8am –10pm and on Saturday and Sunday from 9am – 5pm. Language interpreters are always available.

Toll Free: 800-327-5050

TTY: 800-439-2370

[www.helpline-online.com](http://www.helpline-online.com)

Other ways to access treatment:

- Talk with your health care provider.
- Contact your health insurance company.
- Many employers offer Employee Assistance Programs that provide confidential support and referrals for persons experiencing problems related to substance use.

