



Veteran Community Care Opioid Safety Initiative

Overview

One of VA's top priorities is ensuring that opioid medications are appropriately prescribed to Veterans and used safely. To address gaps in monitoring and control of opioids prescribed to Veterans by community providers, the VA MISSION Act strengthens existing opioid safety requirements by formally aligning community provider standards with the **Opioid Safety Initiative (OSI)** guidelines.

Community Provider Requirements

VA has determined that all opioid-prescribing community providers must complete the Section 131 Community Care Provider Opioid Safety Initiative training course and review the VA OSI guidelines. The guidelines describe the critical decision points in the management of opioid therapy for chronic pain and provide clear and comprehensive evidence-based recommendations incorporating current information and practices for practitioners. These guidelines are included in the Community Care Opioid Safety Initiative course available on [VHA's TRAIN MISSION Act curriculum website](#). To register and create an account in VHA TRAIN MA see: <https://train.missionact.org/main/welcome>.

Additional information:

- The course takes approximately 30 minutes to complete.
- Training must be completed within 180 days of enrolling in the VA network, whether through the Patient-Centered Community Care (PC3) contract or by signing a Veterans Care Agreement (VCA). This requirement will be included in the CCN contract once contract modifications are signed.
- If opioid-prescribing providers do not complete the Opioid Safety Initiative training course within the allotted timeframe, they will not receive any new referrals for Veteran care until they complete the training course. These providers may continue with a current episode of care for the Veteran until completed.

Safe Opioid Prescribing Practices

VA is committed to finding better ways to manage pain for Veterans while limiting the risks of long-term opioid therapy. In partnering with contracted community care providers, VA has implemented safe opioid prescribing practices to ensure community providers have access to available and relevant medical history of the Veteran, including a list of all medications prescribed to the Veteran as known by VA.

After care is provided to a Veteran, contracted community providers must send follow-up medical documentation, including records of any prescriptions for opioids, to the VA medical center (VAMC) listed on the patient referral via an approved method such as Veterans Health Information Exchange (VHIE) or fax. VA is responsible for recording those prescriptions in the electronic health record and for enabling other monitoring of the prescriptions as outlined in OSI.

Community provider prescription information is subject to review by VAMCs and/or Veterans Integrated Service Networks (VISN) on a regular basis. VAMCs and/or VISNs may review community provider and patient level prescription information. If a community provider is found to have aberrant opioid prescription practices, the local Office of Community Care Oversight Council, or equivalent committee, will formally submit the community provider's name for quality review by VA. Appropriate actions based on the review can range from reeducation to exclusion from the VA's network.

Support

Veterans should contact their local VAMC Office of Community Care that authorized their care. The contact information can be found at the bottom of the community care authorization. The nearest VA medical facility can be found by accessing VA's Facility Locator website at:

<https://www.va.gov/find-locations/>

**VHA Pain Management – Opioid Safety Initiative:**

https://www.va.gov/painmanagement/opioid_safety_initiative_osi.asp

Academic Detailing Service - Pain & Opioid Safety Initiative (OSI) Materials:

https://www.pbm.va.gov/PBM/academicdetailingservice/Pain_and_Opioid_Safety.asp

Opioid Safety - Provider Education:

https://www.va.gov/PAINMANAGEMENT/Opioid_Safety/Provider_Education.asp

Provider Education and Training Resources:

https://www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/providers/EDU_Training.asp

Frequently Asked Questions**Q1. Can I still prescribe opioids to a Veteran?**

OSI does not prevent community providers from prescribing opioids. However, all prescriptions should follow the standards outlined in the OSI guidelines.

Q2. I am a non-CCN community provider. Am I required to review the OSI guidelines?

Yes. All providers with opioid prescribing privileges are required to review the OSI guidelines. All community providers can be assessed by VA for unsafe opioid prescription practices.

Q3. How will VA review community provider opioid prescribing practices?

All VISNs are responsible for reviewing the prescription practices of community providers in their regions by leveraging prescription data, patient charts, staff and patient reports, and other data sources. Opioid prescribing practices are reviewed regularly by a cross-functional committee. If the first review results in identification of a potential concern, the community provider will be reviewed in depth by VA and the TPA. In line with contractual requirements, the relevant Third Party Administrator (TPA) will conduct a full clinical and administrative review. If necessary, further review through the TPA quality management group and a joint VA/TPA provider peer committee will follow. VA and the TPA will remain in constant contact regarding providers under review in order to track and respond to providers with aberrant opioid prescribing practices.