



## **Palm Beach County Medical Society**

### **PALM BEACH COUNTY MEDICAL SOCIETY POSITION STATEMENT ON THE OPIOID CRISIS**

Opioid misuse and abuse has garnered national attention to the degree that the government has labelled opioid use an epidemic. Multiple entities have qualified this as a public health crisis. More than 165,000 people died of opioid related overdoses between 1999 and 2014 in the United States according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The CDC has published opioid prescribing guidelines and reports an estimated 1.9 million people in the United States in 2013 were either abusing or dependent on prescription opioids.

In 2010, Florida experienced 1516 oxycodone implicated overdose deaths, with a total of more than 2700 deaths from prescription drugs reported. Legislative efforts, organizational cooperation, and health care provider awareness has helped reverse this trend, but the numbers are still significant. A trend in reduction of opioid prescribing was documented in 2015 in every state of this country.

The Palm Beach County Medical Society is committed to ethical pain management. Physicians are responsible for providing comprehensive and compassionate treatment to those with legitimate pain. We recognize that there is a place for analgesic pharmacotherapy. Pain management should not be based on medications alone. Guidelines for controlled substance prescribing should recognize that there will be instances when opioids may be an appropriate treatment modality for a patient. Proper and effective pain management should involve a range of evidence-based treatments that should also include consideration of non-opioid and non-pharmacologic treatment as well. Diligent surveillance to reduce opioid misuse, abuse, and diversion is necessary. The Society encourages effective use of the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program in conjunction with thorough patient assessments, risk assessments, and attention to objective improvement in overall function. Effective, evidence-based prescribing associated with thorough assessments by qualified personnel is necessary. Proper monitoring of patients is paramount. The Society supports efforts to reduce risk associated with prescriptions of controlled substances. The Society believes that physicians should provide individualized care for patients to optimize their outcome.

The Society recognizes that inappropriate use of prescription agents as well as illicit substances places the population at risk. The most appropriate strategies for reversing the disturbing trends involves responsible prescribing, enhanced mental health care, and ethical addiction treatment. Community and physician education regarding controlled substance prescribing is an on-going priority of the medical society.