



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration
Office of Community Care

www.va.gov/communitycare

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Dear Provider:

The Veterans Health Administration (VHA) appreciates your partnership in the care of this Nation's Veterans. Our objective is to build a collaborative relationship between VHA and its community partners to improve patient outcomes, ensure patient safety, and increase efficiency of our community-based services. This correspondence serves to educate and ensure a greater awareness of the first evidence-based guideline to be shared with our community partners – the VHA Opioid Safety Initiative (OSI).

VHA asks that its community partners review the following documentation, referenced in the resource section below, as background to this effort. We have released an online TRAIN module that also explains much of this information in detail and located at the following registration link: <https://www.train.org/main/course/1073710>.

When accepting referrals of Veterans from our VA medical centers, it is our expectation that our community providers:

- Review and sign the receipt of the evidence-based guidelines outlined in the Opioid Safety Initiative (OSI) included within the VA TRAIN module
- Receive sufficient information from VA in order to provide the highest quality care, including past medical records of pain management, any documented consent for “Long Term Opioids for Pain” (or controlled substance agreement), and a complete medication list.
 - Please alert your VA medical center or one of our contracting partners (HealthNet or TriWest) if that information is not included.
- Additionally, the VA proactively supports building a patient-centered approach to health care including Complementary and Alternative Medicine. As such, for those Veterans that may benefit from additional pain management options including acupuncture and other non-traditional treatments, be aware that the VA can coordinate those services for eligible Veterans.

- Contact your referring VA/your third-party administrator for details on how to coordinate these requests for additional care or also known as a Secondary Authorization Request.
- Lastly, please continue to forward any non-urgent/non-emergent medications (in print or electronic form) to the appropriate VA medical center for dispensing along with a copy of your authorization letter.
 - Up to a fourteen-day prescription for emergent/urgent medications can be filled in a community pharmacy with the Veteran seeking reimbursement from VA. Ideally all narcotic prescriptions would be filled at a VA medical facility pharmacy to improve accountability but we understand that short courses may need to be filled in the community to meet urgent/emergent needs.

Please visit the following resources, in addition to the above Training Module, for more information on the VA Opioid Safety Initiative.

The OSI Toolkit can be found here, each element is listed for your convenience
https://www.va.gov/PAINMANAGEMENT/Opioid_Safety_Initiative_OSI.asp

The Opioid Therapy pocket guide
<https://www.healthquality.va.gov/guidelines/Pain/cot/VADoDOTCPGPocketCard022817.pdf>

Addressing the Opioid Epidemic in the United States - Lessons from the Department of Veterans Affairs
<http://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamainternalmedicine/fullarticle/2608540>

Sincerely,



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