Opioid Misuse
An organizational response while managing cancer-related pain

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**BACKGROUND:** Opioids are commonly prescribed to manage cancer pain. Similar to the general population, patients with cancer are not excluded from the risk for opioid misuse and dependence. This situation can contribute to clinician reluctance to prescribe and manage pain using opioids.

**OBJECTIVES:** The purpose of this article is to provide an overview of how opioid misuse may affect pain management in patients with cancer and to describe a comprehensive cancer center’s approach to safely managing cancer pain.

**METHODS:** Based on a literature review, the project team developed a stewardship program. Project components included selecting a validated screening tool for risk of opioid misuse, determining if a history of addiction affects pain management in patients with cancer, and establishing a task force to focus on the opioid crisis and to follow the Joint Commission’s revised pain assessment and management standards.

**FINDINGS:** The project established a hospitalwide opioid stewardship program. Through the use of a multidisciplinary, universal precautions approach to assessing misuse in all patients with cancer who are prescribed opioids, healthcare teams can potentially reduce risks associated with misuse while safely managing cancer pain.

**KEYWORDS**
opioid misuse; screening tool; patients with cancer; pain management; addiction

**DIGITAL OBJECT IDENTIFIER**
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