

Recently the U.S. Centers for Disease Control issued the [**CDC Guideline for Prescribing Opioids for Chronic Pain – United States, 2016.**](#) The 35-page report is structured around twelve specific recommendations for those who prescribe opioid analgesics for chronic pain arranged in three subject groups:

- Determining When to Initiate or Continue Opioids for Chronic Pain
- Opioid Selection, Dosage, Duration, Follow-Up, and Discontinuation
- Assessing Risk and Addressing Harm

In addition to the narrative report, the website offers helpful resources, such as a prescriber's checklist, posters with the recommendations and clinical reminders, summaries of non-opioid treatments for various chronic conditions, and patient communication tools.

The CDC Guideline is not identical to the Board's *Policy on the Use of Opioid Analgesics in the Treatment of Chronic Pain*. However, the two documents present similar guidance that reflects recognized best practices. A prescriber who practices consistent with either of the guideline documents is on the right path to meet the standard of care and provide quality treatment. The Board will be reviewing its policy in light of the CDC Guideline and any other sources of information that reflect evolving practices and requirements, such as revised State of Vermont rules that are called for by state law. In the meantime, Vermont licensed physicians, physician assistants, and podiatrists should feel comfortable relying on the CDC Guidance and all the accompanying resources.

