



American Professional Agency



RISK MANAGEMENT



Prescribing Best Practices

Psychiatrists have an important role in helping to ensure the safe and effective use of prescription medication and the avoidance of drug diversion. Utilizing prescribing best practices can help to reduce the risk of patient misuse, abuse or overdose of prescription medications, specifically controlled substances. Although not an exhaustive list, prescribing best practices include the following:

- Prior to prescribing, perform a comprehensive evaluation and clearly document a treatment plan. Ensure you ask about substance use history.
- Prescribe lowest effective dose and quantity needed for the expected treatment duration
- Document informed consent. Ensure you discuss risks of taking prescriptions with patients
- Provide patients with information on how to safely use, store and dispose of prescription medication
- Avoid prescribing combinations of prescription opioids and sedatives unless clinically indicated. If you have concerns of misuse by a patient, seek guidance from an attorney or risk management professional.
- Participate in your state prescription drug monitoring program to identify potential misuse and/or drug diversion
- Document clinical rationale for medication prescribed
- Order urine toxicology screening and follow up laboratory screening when indicated. Document results and any necessary follow up
- Never sign incomplete prescriptions or provide patients with post-dated prescriptions
- Lock up prescription pads
- Use tamper-resistant prescription pads that cannot be photocopied
- Write quantity and strength of medications in both letters and numbers
- Ensure compliance with federal and state regulations when prescribing. Refer to DEA Practitioner's Manual and state prescribing regulations for more detailed information
- Consult with your local attorney or risk management professional if you have questions

THIS HANDOUT IS A SAMPLE of the type of Risk Management support provided to our valued policyholders. In addition to "In Session," a quarterly Risk Management newsletter, we also provide content on Curbside Consultations, Documentation, Informed Consent and much more. Please contact American Professional Agency at psychiatry@americanprofessional.com or 877.740.1777 to learn more about our comprehensive medical malpractice coverage and complimentary risk management programs.

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