

# San Diego Death Diaries Is Your Name on a Death Rx?



Roneet Lev, MD FACEP

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## Prescription Drug Abuse

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The Epidemic

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How We Got Here

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San Diego Death Diaries

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Best Practices

## The Epidemic



- Epidemic caused by the healthcare system

9.4 million Americans on long term pain medication

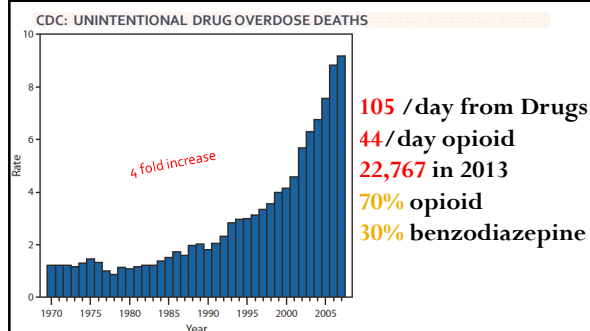
## Aaron Rubin

1982 -

- Oxycodone Overdose 2005, age 23

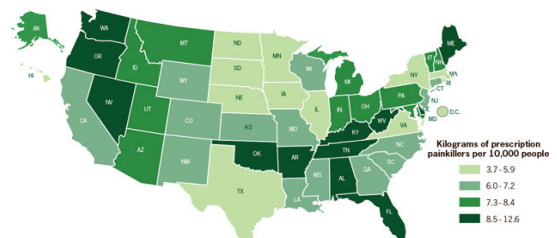


## US Deaths



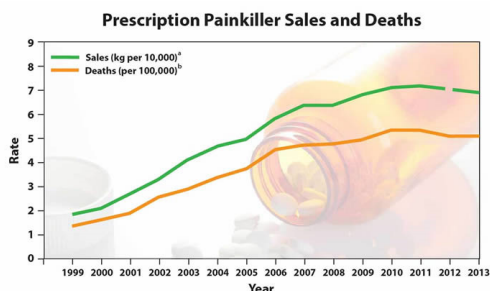
## Number of Pills

10 TIMES MORE RX TODAY THAN 10 YEARS AGO

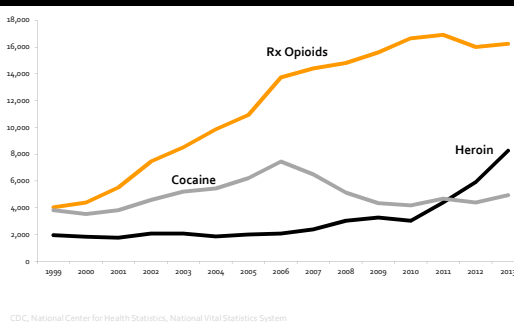


California: 6.2 kg pain killers per 10,000 people (FL 12.6)  
Enough to medicate every single American around the clock for a month

## Rates of Opioid Sales, Deaths, Addiction Treatment (1999-2013)



## US Drug Related Deaths



## United States Opioid Facts

According to the American Society of Interventional Pain Physicians:

- US has 4.6% of the world population.
- US has 80% of opioid supply.
- US has 99% of hydrocodone supply.
- US has 2/3's of world's illegal drugs.



## How We Got Here

- 1997 Senate Bill 402 The Pain Patient's Bill of Rights
- 1999 Pain – 5<sup>th</sup> Vital Sign
- 2001 Clinton Administration: Decade Pain Control and Research
- 2005 California Pain Management Standards
- Patient Satisfaction Surveys



## The Dark Truth behind Pain as a 5<sup>th</sup> Vital Sign

Wall Street Journal article December 2012:  
 "A PAIN CHAMPION HAS SECOND THOUGHTS"

### Dr. Russell Portenoy

- Pain Specialist NY
- Journal Reference: *Pain* 1986;25(2):171
- Review of 38 patients concluded: "Opioid medications can be safely and effectively prescribed to selected patients with relatively little risk of producing the maladaptive behaviors which define opioid abuse"
- Less than 1% risk addiction
- Director American Pain Foundation
- Advocate pain as 5<sup>th</sup> Vital Sign
- \$\$\$\$\$\$ from multiple opioid manufacturers



## The Dark Truth behind Patient Satisfaction Surveys

THE COST OF SATISFACTION – A NATIONAL STUDY OF PATIENT SATISFACTION, HEALTHUTILIZATION, EXPENDITURES, AND MORTALITY

Fenton et al. Arch Intern Med 2012;172(5): 405-411

- 51,946 patients from 2000 – 2007, National Expenditure Study
- Lower Emergency Department admissions
- Higher inpatient admissions
- Higher total expenditures, 8.8%
- Higher medication expenditures, 9.1%
- Higher mortality

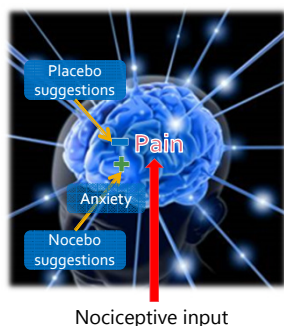
INVOLVING PATIENTS IN DECISIONS RAISES CARE COSTS?

JAMA Internal Medicine, May 28, 2013

- 51,946 patients from 2000 – 2007, National Expenditure Study
- 22,000 patients, University of Chicago, 2003 - 2011
- \$865 increase per patient
- 35 million hospitalizations = \$8.7 billion added cost

## Understanding Chronic Pain

- Perception of pain
- The pain receptors stop working
- Opioid induced hyperalgesia: diffuse pain which increases with more opioids
- Questionable usefulness of opioids for chronic pain
- Chronic Pain Management as a multidisciplinary approach



## Misuse of Medication

### Opioid Analgesics: Users in the Past Month

Nonmedical users  
5.3 million

Medical users  
9.0 million



National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 2009. <http://www.oas.samhsa.gov>



## Street Value

Common Slang you will see in text messages and typical price per pill:



- Oxycontin** – \$45 - \$80 for one 80mg tablet or \$25 - \$35 bulk rate.
  - OCs, 80s, Beans, Ox, Cookies, Oscars, Dootins, Any two words starting with OC (e.g., Orange Crayons).
  - Smoking Oxy – “Chome” or “Choming”



- Oxycodone** – (Percocet, Percodan) – \$5.00 - \$10.00 ea.
  - Percs
  - 30 mg oxycodone (Roxies) - \$30.00



- Hydrocodone** – (Vicodin, Lortab, Lorcet) \$5.00 - \$8.00 ea.
  - Vics, Norcos, Watsons



- Methadone** – \$10.00 for one 10mg tablet or \$5.00 bulk rate.
  - Wafers

## Changing Education

- Pain Scale/ Functional Pain
  - Don't need to get to zero
- Encouragement of medications
  - Give medications in waiting room before examination
- Methadone
  - Give or don't give?
- Tramadol
- Misinformation
- Lawsuits
  - Over-prescribe or under prescribe



## Death Statistics

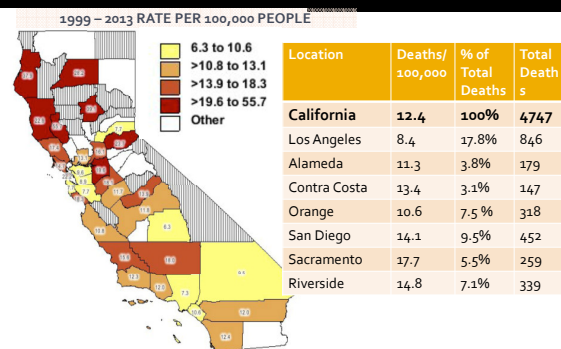
Death is a Fact.

Everything Else is Conjecture.

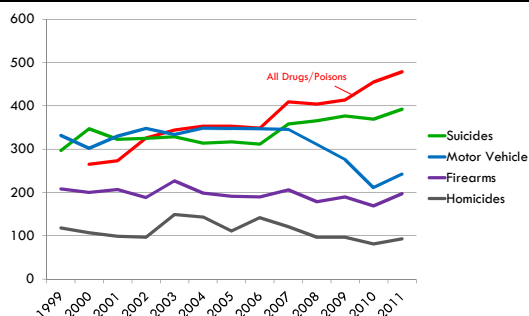


William Farr  
1807 - 1883

## California Drug Induced Deaths

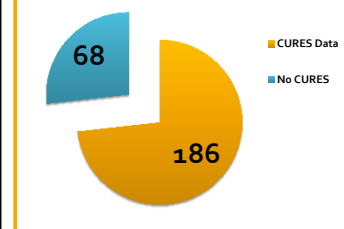


## San Diego Non-Natural Deaths



## San Diego Rx Death Data

254 Prescription Related Deaths in San Diego 2013



- ME Data
  - 254 deaths with prescriptions as cause of death
  - Could be with alcohol, illicit, over the counter
- CURES Data (aka PDMP)
  - Outpatient pharmacies
  - Does Not Include
    - VA
    - Balboa Naval Hospital
    - Methadone Clinics
    - Inpatient hospitals

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## Medical Examiner Data

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Prescription                           | 154 |
| Prescription + Illicit                 | 44  |
| Prescription + Alcohol                 | 39  |
| Prescription + Illicit + Alcohol       | 10  |
| Prescription + Over the Counter (OTC)  | 4   |
| Prescription + Alcohol + OTC           | 2   |
| Prescription + Illicit + OTC           | 1   |
| Prescription + Illicit + Alcohol + OTC | 1   |
| Total                                  | 254 |

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## Death Diary: 49 year old female "Compliant"

12 Rx – 1 Psychiatrist – 1 Pharmacy

September Clonazepam 1mg #45, 45  
 October Clonazepam 1mg - #30, 45, 90  
 November Clonazepam 1mg - #90  
 December Clonazepam 1 mg - #15,90  
 January Clonazepam 1 mg - #120  
 February Clonazepam - #120  
 March Clonazepam - #30, 120

Autopsy: Oxycodone

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## Death Diary: 59 year old male "Holy Trinity"

75 Rx – 1 Psychiatrist – 3 Primary Care – 1 Pain

September Hydrocodone, Soma Hydromorphone, Ambien  
 October Clonazepam, Soma, Hydromorphone, Ambien,  
 Hydrocodone, Soma, Clonazepam  
 November Hydromorphone, Hydrocodone, Soma, Clonazepam,  
 Hydromorphone  
 December Hydrocodone, Hydrocodone, Soma, Clonazepam,  
 Hydromorphone, Ambien  
 January Hydrocodone, Soma, Clonazepam, Hydromorphone 4 mg,  
 Ambien  
 .....  
 August Hydrocodone, Soma, Clonazepam, Morphine 60 mg ,  
 Ambien

Autopsy: Morphine, Ambien, Sertraline, Hydroxyzine

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## Death Diary: 56 Year Old Female "Start n methadone, End on Methadone"

23 Scripts  
 10 Providers

February, March No Meds  
 April ER#1: Hydrocodone #10  
 Dr. R: Codeine#40, Lorazepam #42  
 May Dr. P: Hydrocodone #15, Lorazepam #20  
 June ER#2: Hydrocodone #20, Lorazepam #20  
 August ER#3: Oxycodone #20, Lorazepam #21  
 ER#4: Oxycodone #21, Lorazepam #20  
 September ER#5: Oxycodone #20, Lorazepam #6  
 Dr. L: Methadone #120  
 October Dr. L: Methadone #120  
 ER #6: Hydrocodone #15  
 Dr. W: Lorazepam #8  
 November ER #3: Oxycodone #5, Lorazepam #4  
 Dr. L: Methadone #120  
 December Dr. L: Methadone #120  
 January ER #7: Lorazepam #4  
 February 1, 2013 Dr. L: Methadone #30  
 Death: February 7, 2013  
 Methadone, Clonazepam, Phenytoin, Carbamazepine, Gabapentin

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## 275 Pharmacies

### 2013 By the Numbers

|   |       |
|---|-------|
| Average Scripts Per Patient<br>- PDMP Match, No Illicit, Doctor Shopper | 23.5  |
| Highest Number of Scripts for 1 patient                                 | 123   |
| Average Number of Pharmacies  | 3.12  |
| Highest Number of Pharmacies for 1 Patient                              | 21    |
| Percent of Pharmacies With a Single Death<br>- 1 Pharmacy had 12 deaths | 54.2% |

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## Specific Medications on CURES

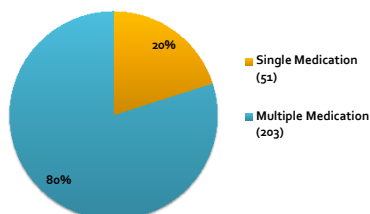
(Number of Patients)

### 33 Medications; 4366 Rx

| OPIOIDS          | BENZODIAZEPINES    | SLEEP               | STIMULANTS | OTHER |
|------------------|--------------------|---------------------|------------|-------|
| Hydrocodone 123  | Chloriazepoxide 17 | Oxazepam 3          |            |       |
| Oxycodone 84     | Tempezepam 17      | Oxymorphone 3       |            |       |
| Clonazepam 44    | Methadone 14       | Phenobarbital 3     |            |       |
| Zolpidem 43      | Fentanyl 13        | Chloral Hydrate 2   |            |       |
| Alprazolam 39    | Buprenorphine 11   | Dronabinol 2        |            |       |
| Lorazepam 37     | Amphetamine 7      | Zaleplon 2          |            |       |
| Morphine 32      | Testosterone 6     | Clorazepate 1       |            |       |
| Carisoprodol 30  | Triazolam 6        | Estrogen 1          |            |       |
| Codeine 27       | Lunesta 4          | Lisdexamefetamine 1 |            |       |
| Diazepam 26      | Lyrica 4           | Methylphenidate 1   |            |       |
| Hydromorphone 20 | Phentermine 4      |                     |            |       |

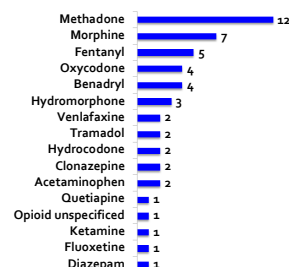
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## Number Medications on ME Report



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## Single Medications on ME Report

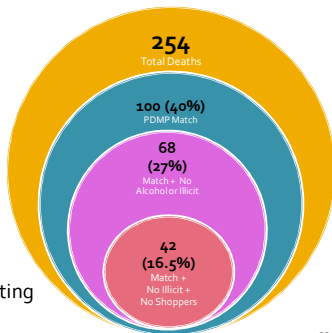


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## PDMP Match

Rx 2 months before death matches ME report

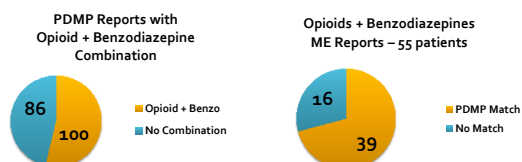
- PDMP Match, No Alcohol, No Illicit, No Doc Shop
  - 64% Female
  - 51 years Ave
  - More Rx
  - Less Providers
  - Less Pharmacies
  - More Single Rx
  - More Opioids, Sleep Aids, High Morphine Equivalents, Long Acting



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## Opioids + Benzodiazepines

- All PDMP Reports – 54% (100 patients)
- ME Deaths – 21% (55)
- ME/PDMP Match – 71% (39)

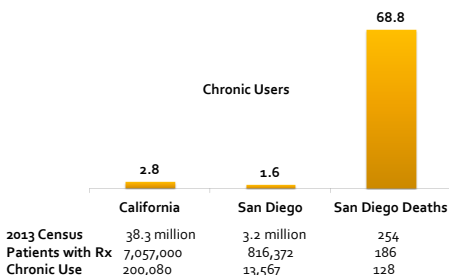


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## Chronic Use

### 3 or More Consecutive Months For Same Rx

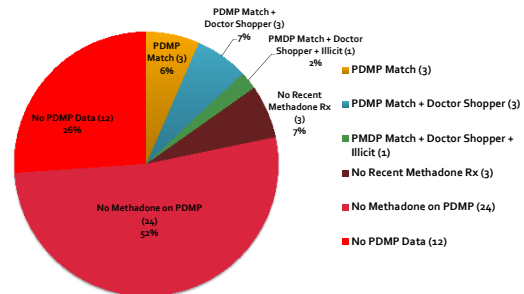
- 69% of Deaths were Chronic Users; 96% of all Rx



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## Methadone Deaths

46 total; 7 from CURES; 39 or 85% outside CURES

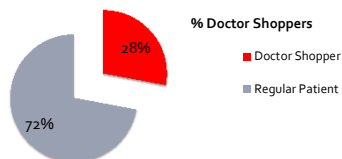


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## Doctor Shopping

4 providers + 4 pharmacies in 12 months

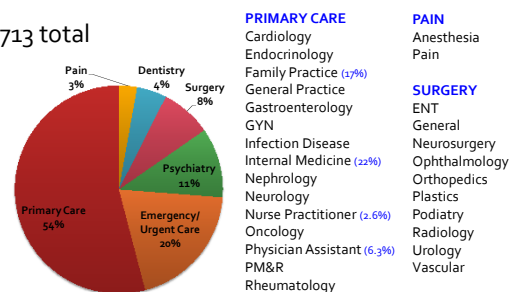
- 52 Patients (28% of all PDMP Reports) were Doctor Shoppers
- "The Heavy Half" = Received 51% of all Rx
- 50/50 Male/Female



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## Who are the Prescribers?

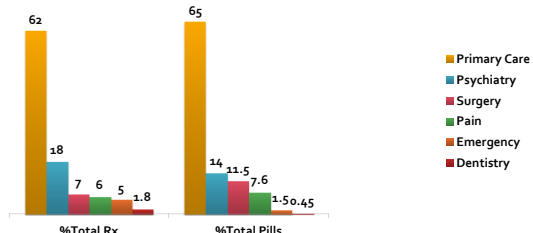
- 713 total



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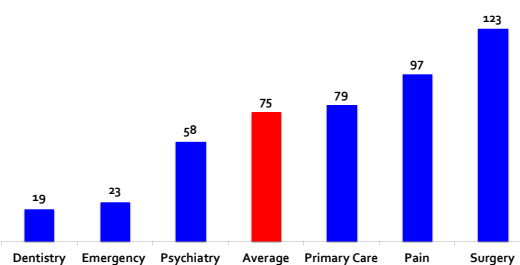
## Who is Prescribing the Most?

Rx by Specialty

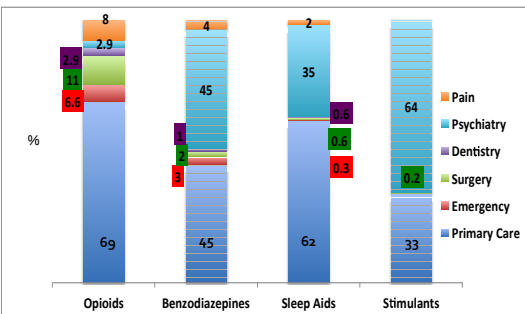


## How many pills do you need?

Pills/Rx



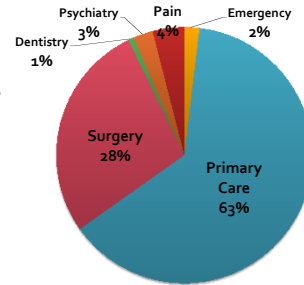
## Specialists and Medication Types



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## Who is Prescribing Hydrocodone?

- 95,821 pills
- 990 Rx
- 123 Patients



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## Where are opportunities to save lives?

- Co-Prescribing
- Escalating Dosage
- Is Medication Necessary?
- Drug Screens
- Pharmacy
- Health Plan

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## Best Practices

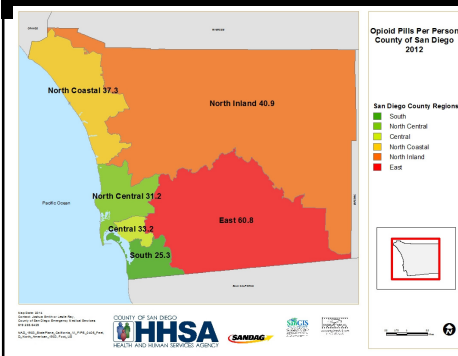
- PDA Task Force
- PDA Medical Task Force
- PDA Pharmacy Committee
- "ONE SAN DIEGO"



## PDA Report Card

|  |  |                |                  |                  |                  |                          |
|--|--|----------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------------------|
|  |  | 228<br>(8.5)   | 267<br>(9.8)     | 268<br>(9.8)     | 259<br>(8.2)     | 244<br>(7.6)             |
|  |  | 2931<br>(91.1) | 3,278<br>(105.2) | 3,791<br>(121.2) | 5,723<br>(181.7) | Not Available until 2016 |
|  |  |                | 19.6%            |                  | 17%              |                          |
|  |  | 13,893         | 13,696           | 14,383           | 16,629           | 16,104                   |
|  |  | 4.1%           | 4.2%             | 4.7%             | 4.5%             | 4.5%                     |
|  |  | 21.4%          | 22.0%            | 23.1%            | 24.8%            | 27.7%                    |
|  |  | 40%            | 41%              | 38%              | 43%              | 39%                      |
|  |  | 31%            | 37%              | 40%              | 37%              | 37%                      |
|  |  | 465            | 505              | 387              | 311              | 214                      |
|  |  | 1,341          | 1,288            | 1,311            | 1,193            | 1,034                    |
|  |  | 14             | 26               | 8                | 5                | 8                        |
|  |  | 7,446          | 13,008           | 16,707           | 18,732           | 17,676                   |
|  |  | 3,400          | 5,128            | 9,902            | 13,872           | 13,079                   |
|  |  | 33.4           | 35.9             | 37.9             | 36.3             | 36.3                     |
|  |  | 13             | 13.3             | 13.8             | 13.7             | 13.3                     |
|  |  | 4.3            | 4.5              | 4.8              | 4.9              | 4.7                      |

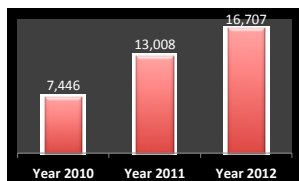
## San Diego CURES Map





## Rx TAKE BACKS

Pounds of Prescription  
Collected during  
San Diego Take Back Days



## Prescription Drug Take Back Day

Drop Off Your Unused Prescription Drugs

Saturday, April 27, 2013

10:00 AM to 2:00 PM

NO QUESTIONS ASKED! Help Prevent Prescription Drug Abuse

LOCATIONS IN CENTRAL SAN DIEGO COUNTY:

- Scripps Green Hospital
- 2004 N. Torrey Pines Rd., La Jolla
- SharpHealthcare Corporate Office
- 8800 Scripps Canyon Blvd., San Diego
- Univ. of CA San Diego - (at 705)
- 4 King E. Camino Real Dr., San Diego
- SDPS Eastern Division
- 1025 Ward Dr., San Diego
- SDPS Southeastern Division
- 12121 Scripps Dr., San Diego
- SDPS Southwest Division
- 12121 Scripps Dr., San Diego
- SDPS Western Division
- 12121 Scripps Dr., San Diego
- San Diego County Landfill
- 2855 Mission La Jolla, San Diego
- North Park Clinic
- 1027 Oak St., San Diego
- Naval College Police Sub Station
- 7200 Navy College Dr., San Diego
- Veterans Administration Hospital
- 3300 La Jolla Village Drive, San Diego
- MILITARY
- (Military, Veterans, Beneficiaries, & Staff Only)
- Naval Medical Center San Diego Building
- 3500 La Jolla Village Drive, S.D.S.
- Navy Exchange 3300 La Jolla Village Drive
- 3300 La Jolla Village Drive, San Diego

## Two Populations

### Prevention



### Weaning



## Emergency and Urgent Care Guidelines

**SAFE PAIN MEDICINE  
PRESCRIBING  
IN EMERGENCY DEPARTMENTS**

For your SAN DIEGO County Medical Center, we have developed these guidelines to help you with your patients.

1. We look for red flag symptoms. We use our own clinical judgment and use the following information to help us:
2. You should have only ONE provider and ONE pharmacy. We do not want multiple providers and multiple pharmacies. If you have multiple providers and multiple pharmacies, we will not prescribe for you.
3. If you are on multiple medications, we will not prescribe for you. We will only prescribe for you if you are on one medication.
4. We do not want multiple prescriptions. We will not prescribe for you if you have multiple prescriptions. If you have multiple prescriptions, we will not prescribe for you.
5. We do not want multiple prescriptions from multiple providers. We will not prescribe for you if you have multiple prescriptions from multiple providers. If you have multiple prescriptions from multiple providers, we will not prescribe for you.
6. We do not want multiple prescriptions from multiple pharmacies. We will not prescribe for you if you have multiple prescriptions from multiple pharmacies. If you have multiple prescriptions from multiple pharmacies, we will not prescribe for you.
7. We do not want multiple prescriptions from multiple providers and multiple pharmacies. We will not prescribe for you if you have multiple prescriptions from multiple providers and multiple pharmacies. If you have multiple prescriptions from multiple providers and multiple pharmacies, we will not prescribe for you.
8. We do not want multiple prescriptions from multiple providers and multiple pharmacies. We will not prescribe for you if you have multiple prescriptions from multiple providers and multiple pharmacies. If you have multiple prescriptions from multiple providers and multiple pharmacies, we will not prescribe for you.
9. We do not want multiple prescriptions from multiple providers and multiple pharmacies. We will not prescribe for you if you have multiple prescriptions from multiple providers and multiple pharmacies. If you have multiple prescriptions from multiple providers and multiple pharmacies, we will not prescribe for you.
10. We do not want multiple prescriptions from multiple providers and multiple pharmacies. We will not prescribe for you if you have multiple prescriptions from multiple providers and multiple pharmacies. If you have multiple prescriptions from multiple providers and multiple pharmacies, we will not prescribe for you.

1-888-724-7240

For the emergency department in San Diego County, we have developed these guidelines to help you with your patients.

U.S. HHS  
LIVE WELL  
San Diego County Medical Center

## Medication Agreement

PATIENT MEDICATION AGREEMENT  
for Painkillers, Anxiety Medication, Stimulants, and all Controlled Substances

- For Chronic Medication = 3 months
- Only 1 provider and 1 pharmacy
- No ED visit
- No refills
- Do not drive if impaired

- It is important that you follow all these instructions, EXACTLY.
- 1. These medicines are dangerous. They can cause serious health problems, including death, even if taken as prescribed. They are also addictive.
  - 2. You should get your medicine from only ONE provider and ONE pharmacy. This helps prevent side effects and overdoses.
  - 3. Take the medication only as you are told. Do not take more medicine than you are prescribed. They need to last you until your next appointment.
  - 4. Your medicine is only for you. Do not share your medicine. Do not allow others to use your medicines. Do not sell or trade your medicines.
  - 5. Keep your medicines secure. We recommend locking them. Lost or stolen medication means other are in danger.
  - 6. All emergency departments in San Diego and Imperial Counties have stated that they will not prescribe these medications if you lose them or feel you need more.
  - 7. The dangers of the medicine are greater with anything that makes you sleepy. Mixing your medicine with alcohol, street drugs, sleeping pills, or other drugs can make you sick or die.
  - 8. Do not drive a car or do dangerous activities if you are not fully alert when on these medicines.
  - 9. Your treatment will be monitored in different ways. You may be asked to do a drug test. You may be asked to show your pills. The State of California tracks your prescriptions.
  - 10. If your provider feels that your medicine is not helping, the medicine will be stopped. You will be treated with other methods.



## Provider Guidelines

- Safe dosing for acute and chronic pain
- Do not mix opioids and benzodiazepines
- Avoid Tramadol, Soma, Phenergan Rx
- Use CURES

### SAFE PAIN MEDICATION PRESCRIBING GUIDELINES

Prescription drug abuse has been declared an epidemic by the Centers for Disease Control. According to 2012 San Diego Medical Examiner data, the number one cause of non-natural death is due to drug overdoses and exceeds the number of deaths in motor vehicle crashes. The majority of these deaths are from prescription drugs.

The following guidelines are a collection of recommendations developed by the San Diego County Medical Society Prescription Drug Abuse Medical Task Force and draws on experience of various groups across the country. These are guidelines, not policies and up to physician discretion.

## How to Say No Nicely



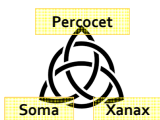
- Don't be the Candy Man
- Don't be the Candy Land





## Red Flag Medications

- Holy Trinity
- Benzodiazepine plus Opioids
- Soma (Carisoprodol)
- Ambien (Zolpidem) – long term
- Xanax - long term
- Long acting Opioid - by ED provider
- Methadone - by Primary Care
- Cough syrup with Codeine
- Tramadol



| Morphine Equivalents |    |
|----------------------|----|
| Morphine 1 mg        | 1  |
| Hydrocodone 5 mg     | 5  |
| Tramadol 50 mg       | 10 |

## Can marijuana lead to opioid addiction?



### Cyclical Vomiting Syndrome



## San Diego CURES Registration

1. Register On Line
2. Print Registration and supporting documents
3. Email Verification to CURES office
4. Submit to County Public Health Officer



- **OFFICE OF VITAL RECORDS**
- 3851 ROSECRANS, SUTIER 802
- 619-692-5550
- M-F 9 AM – 5 PM, NO APPOINTMENT

## CURES 2.0

CURES makes you a better doctor.

State of California Department of Justice  
Office of the Attorney General

Kamala D. Harris  
Attorney General

AG Home Page

**Tools & Resources**

- Health Information Privacy (HIPAA Guidelines)
- FAQ's

**PDMP (CURES)**

**User Agreement**  
The California Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP), CURES, is committed to assisting in the reduction of pharmaceutical drug diversion without affecting legitimate medical practice and patient care. The CURES system is designed to identify and deter drug abuse and diversion through accurate and rapid tracking of Schedule II through IV controlled substances. The role of the PDMP entrusts that well informed prescribers and pharmacists can and will use their professional expertise to evaluate their patients care and assist those patients who may be abusing controlled substances.

**NEW FEATURES**

- Dash Board
- Alerts
- Provider Communication
- Delegate Feature
- Save Reports
- Contract

## Medical Examiner Feedback



## Naloxone



Figure 1. Evzio home-use auto-injector to reverse the effects of an opioid overdose.

## Pediatric Anticipatory Guidelines



- Lock It
- Count It
- Dispose It
- Avoid It

## Methadone Clinics



## Jails and Prisons



## Specific Solutions

Soma – off formula

- Indian Health Clinic

No Benzodiazepines and Opioids

- VA

30% functional improvement in 6 weeks

- Washington State Work Comp, Dr. Gary Franklin

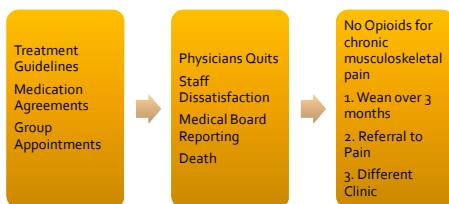
Subtract Pills in refills

- Pain Clinics

Holy Trinity – off formulary

- Congressman Earl Carter

## One Clinic Crisis Solution



## Heath Plans

- "One Doctor, One Pharmacy"
- Formulary Restrictions
- Prior Authorization



## 10 THINGS YOU CAN DO

1. Use CURES
2. Do Not Overprescribe
  - 10-20 pills for acute pain
  - Only what will be used, no leftovers
  - Subtract pills from other prescribers for chronic pain
  - Is chronic pain medications really the solution?
3. Don't mix Opioid and Benzodiazepines
4. Use Drug Screen
5. Use Medication Agreement for Controlled Medication
6. Red Flag Medications – risk/benefit analysis
7. Support Emergency Department Safe Pain Prescribing
8. Use functional pain scale
9. Refer to pain specialist and addiction when appropriate
10. Cooperate with DEA

## One San Diego



## One San Diego



- 1 • One Provider-One Pharmacy
- 2 • CURES
- 3 • Medication Agreement
- 4 • Benzodiazepines + Opioids
- 5 • Emergency Department Guidelines

## SanDiegoSafePrescribing.org



## SanDiegoRxAbuseTaskForce.Org

