

Attention All SLUCare Providers

On July 5, 2018, Governor Parsons signed into law an act to limit initial prescriptions of opioids to treat acute pain. The new law goes into effect on **August 28, 2018**. Codified at Section 195.080, the new law generally:

1. Prohibits a practitioner from issuing an initial prescription of opioids for more than a seven-day supply upon the initial consultation and treatment of a patient for **acute pain**;
2. requires that, before issuing an initial prescription for an opioid controlled substance, a practitioner must consult with the patient regarding the quantity of the opioid and the patient's option to fill the prescription in a lesser quantity; and
3. requires a provider to inform the patient of the risks associated with the opioid prescribed.

The statute only allows practitioners to issue more than a seven-day supply of opioids to treat acute pain if, in their professional medical judgment, more than a seven-day supply is required to treat their patient's acute pain. But in that instance, the practitioner must document in the patient's medical record the condition triggering the necessity for more than a seven-day supply and that a non-opioid alternative was not appropriate to address the patient's condition.

Excepted from the statute are prescriptions for opioids for a patient who is currently undergoing treatment for cancer, is receiving hospice care from a hospice or palliative care, is a resident of a long-term care facility, or is receiving treatment for substance abuse or opioid dependence.

In compliance with this new law, SLUCare expects that its providers will not issue any initial opioid prescription without discussing this decision with the patient; and documenting the medical necessity, the discussion of the risks associated with the opioid prescribed, the quantity of opioids to be issued, and the option to fill in a lesser quantity.

In further compliance with this new law, SLUCare expects that its providers will not issue opioid prescriptions for acute pain beyond seven days except in exceptional circumstances, and then only upon a documented finding of a condition requiring more than a seven-day opioid prescription that could not be appropriately addressed by a non-opioid.

SLUCare will work with SSM Epic and University ITS to develop and provide training in the use of Epic tools for appropriate documentation and prescribing, compliant with this new law.

The societal, legal, and regulatory environments around the use and abuse of opioid medications is a dynamic situation; and there may be additional frequent changes as we move forward. Please do expect further communications from both the Office of the General Counsel for the Medical Center and SLUCare Administration. We will monitor the environment, and provide updates, guidance, and resources as quickly and effectively as we can. These are important communications; and we rely upon your review and prompt feedback about concerns and questions that you may have. Thank you.

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