



Idaho Board of Nursing Guidance Statement

Prescribing of Controlled Substances in Idaho

The Idaho Board of Nursing recognizes the need for appropriate treatment of acute and chronic pain, yet also recognizes the potential for diversion, abuse, misuse, and injury or death from narcotic medications. We believe a clear statement of our expectations may promote responsible prescribing and dispensing in the nurses we regulate. By working together, we believe optimal care can be provided and drug abuse or misuse deterred.

To that end, we agree to the following general principles for prescribing and dispensing narcotic medications:

1. Safeguards against abuse and misuse of prescription narcotics include a thorough evaluation of the patient's condition, needs, and history as well as their risks for addiction or diversion. Addressing patient-specific social determinants of health, previous trauma, and/or abuse is fundamental in completing a thorough holistic evaluation. Further safeguards in the treatment of pain include a therapeutic relationship with an ongoing reconciliation and alignment of functional goals.
2. Regular access to the Idaho Prescription Monitoring Program (PMP) may provide valuable information for the treating professional about the patient's behavior and needs.
3. Practitioners treating acute and chronic pain should stay informed of evidence-based practices to develop and maintain competence in the assessment and treatment of these common but difficult to treat conditions. This includes maintaining comfort with consultation and knowledge of all available treatments, both traditional as well as complementary treatment modalities.
4. Collaboration with others on the healthcare team can improve patient treatment and function as well as aid in the necessary vigilance needed to prevent prescription narcotic misuse, abuse, diversion or harm.
5. Patients should receive education on appropriate use, storage and disposal of narcotic medication, as well as their potential for abuse, diversion and misuse. Further, patient empowerment through education and investment in functional goal setting is considered therapeutic.
6. Practitioners should discuss with patients the effect their medical condition and medication use may have on their ability to safely operate a vehicle in any mode of transportation.

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