

Collaborating to Address the Opioid Crisis



Opportunities for Collaborating with Medical Professionals to Prevent Opioid Misuse

Prescriber education is a term used to describe efforts to change prescriber behavior. Prescribers are healthcare practitioners with the authority to issue prescriptions for controlled substances, including opioids. This group includes physicians, registered nurses, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, dentists, and even veterinarians.

Prescribers are important partners in efforts to prevent prescription drug misuse and overdose. Uniquely positioned to moderate the supply and demand for prescription opioids, prescribers can play a key role as experts in communicating the risks of opioid misuse, identifying patients at risk for opioid overdose, and promoting safe opioid use.

This tool presents examples of state- and local-level opportunities for collaborating with medical professionals in a variety of sectors to plan and support prescriber education programming. The list is not comprehensive, but can be used as a starting point for thinking about ways to connect.

Opportunities at the State Level

Partner	Opportunities for Collaboration
Medical Boards	<ul style="list-style-type: none">  Engage medical and nursing boards to create and institute prescriber guidelines that align with the CDC Guidelines for Prescribing Opioids for Chronic Pain, providing technical assistance as needed.  Offer assistance coordinating academic detailing¹ opportunities for prescribers within the state system.









¹ Academic detailing refers to a structured one-on-one educational intervention in a prescriber's practice setting, typically delivered face-to-face.

Partner	Opportunities for Collaboration
Medical Professional Associations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with physician, dental, and nursing organizations to ensure opioid drug prevention topics and best prescribing practices are included in their continuing education curricula.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide education resources that these professional associations can incorporate in their online and newsletter communication with members.
Medical Professional Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with medical, dental, nursing, and veterinarian schools to ensure that best practices for opioid prescribing, preventing prescription drug and opioid misuse/overdose, alternative pain management therapies, and other relevant information is incorporated into educational curricula and continuing education programming.
Veterans Affairs Medical Centers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote best practice guidelines for prescribing opioids.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with veteran providers to assess the prevention needs of veterans, provide information on naloxone, and increase awareness on the role of Prescription Drug Monitoring Programs (PDMPs) in preventing opioid misuse.
Veterinarian Associations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage state-level veterinarian organizations to increase awareness of veterinarian clinics as a possible source of prescription drugs for diversion.²
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide education, information, and resources to increase awareness of the opioid crisis and potential implications for veterinarians (e.g., how to recognize individuals who may be attempting to obtain prescription opioids for their pets for misuse).

Opportunities at the Local Level

Partner	Opportunities for Collaboration
Hospitals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reach out to hospitals to access data on overdose-related emergency department (ED) visits.

² Diversion is the redirection of controlled substances from their intended, lawful purpose to illicit use. Increases in the diversion of prescription opioids may contribute to increases in illicit opioid use and related overdose risks.

Partner	Opportunities for Collaboration
Hospitals (cont.)	 Assess local ED's willingness and need for assistance implementing naloxone distribution programs.
	 Train prescribers on opioid safety, naloxone administration, and using the state's PDMP.
Local Health Centers and Regional/County-level Medical Groups	 Support prescribers in holding educational events for patients and disseminating literature and information in health center lobbies or resource kiosks.
	 Larger regional- or county-level systems and managed care systems can set policy for partner organizations and local prevention practitioners can share examples of effective organizational policies relating to prescribing practices and training requirements.
Private Medical Practices	 Promote use of state and/or national guidelines for prescribing opioids.
	 Convene prescribers for training on naloxone administration and using the state's PDMP.
	 Invite prescribers to participate in local prevention efforts as champions for change.
Private Veterinarian Practices	 Develop materials and trainings to educate veterinarians on misuse of pet medications.

Related Tools

For more information on prescriber education strategies, check out these tools from SAMHSA's Center for the Application of Prevention Technologies:

- [Opioid Overdose and the Role of Prescriber Education](#)**. This at-a-glance resource describes the relationship between opioid overdose and overprescribing, and makes the case for prescriber education as a prevention strategy.
- [Preparing for Prescriber Education: Getting the Lay of the Land](#)**. This practice-support tool identifies the different agencies responsible for prescribing and distributing prescription opioids in a community.

For more tools and resources to support opioid misuse and overdose prevention efforts, visit samhsa.gov/capt.