

# Understanding Ohio's Prescribing Rules for Chronic & Subacute Pain

## What are the Rules?

Found in Ohio Administrative Code 4731-11, the rules establish procedures that all Ohio prescribers need to follow when prescribing opioids for the treatment of subacute and chronic pain.

## What are Subacute and Chronic Pain?

Subacute: Pain lasting between 6 and 12 weeks.  
Chronic: Pain which lasts 12 weeks or more.

## How Do I Know Opioid Medication is Appropriate for My Patient?

Before starting a patient on opioid medication, the rules require the following:

- Complete and document a full patient history.
- Complete and document an appropriate physical exam, imaging studies, lab tests and urine drug testing.
- Complete and document functional pain assessment and treatment plan.
- Perform an OARRS check.
- Review patient's prescription history and risk for substance use disorder.

## Established Checkpoints for MEDs

At certain Morphine-Equivalent Doses (MEDs), the rules require the following:

### 50 MED

- Obtain written, informed consent from patient regarding treatment.
- Review and update status of patient's underlying condition.
- Assess functioning and look for signs of prescription misuse.
- Consider consulting with a specialist or obtaining a medication therapy management review.
- Consider offering a prescription for Naloxone.
- Conduct a review of patient response and adherence at least every three months.

### 80 MED

- Obtain written, informed consent from patient regarding treatment.
- Look for signs of opioid prescription misuse.
- Consult with a specialist or obtain a medication therapy management review.
- Offer the patient a prescription for Naloxone.

### 120 MED

- Obtain a recommendation from a board-certified pain medicine, hospice or palliative care physician.
- Recommendation must be based on a face-to-face examination.

## Exceptions

The rules do not apply to:

- Patients being treated for terminal conditions, in hospice care or a hospital setting.
- Patients who were already on a dosage of 120 MED prior to December 23rd, 2018.



## At TakeChargeOhio.org, you'll find resources to support prescribers, including:

- *"A Pocket Guide to Tapering Opioids for Chronic Pain"* – offering information on how to individualize tapering plans to minimize withdrawal symptoms while maximizing pain treatment.
- Pain management literature for prescribers, such as *"Weighing the Risks for Opioid Therapy"* and *"The Effectiveness and Risks of Long-Term Opioid Therapy for Chronic Pain."*
- A toolkit of information on the risks of opioid therapy, alternative ways to manage pain and safe storage practices for prescription medication.



By following the regulations and using best practices, you'll be helping to lead all of Ohio toward safer pain medication use and pain management practices.

Visit [TakeChargeOhio.org](https://TakeChargeOhio.org) to find more tips and resources on safe medication prescribing and pain management practices.

BROUGHT TO YOU BY:  
**RecoveryOhio**  
Released April 2019



State Medical Board of  
**Ohio**