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New AAAHC Tool Battles Opioid Over-Prescribing with Provider Guidelines
Toolkit Focuses on Volume and Length of Opioid Prescriptions and Dosages

(Skokie, Ill.) May 8, 2017 – AAAHC has released a new toolkit to combat opioid overdose through improved stewardship programs. The resource is designed to help providers review and assess the volume and length of opioid prescriptions and dosages to mitigate risk of patient overdose and death.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has labeled the growing number of opioid overdoses in the U.S. as a national epidemic, contributing to 91 deaths each day. From 2014-2015, the death rate from synthetic opioids other than methadone increased by more than 72 percent, and in 2015, the U.S. reported 63 percent of all overdose deaths were opioid-related.ⁱ

Several factors have led to the opioid epidemic, including behavior and characteristics of providers and users, as well as environmental and systemic determinants.ⁱⁱ

“To address the opioid epidemic, we must go to one of sources of the problem – provider prescribing,” said Naomi Kuznets, PhD., vice president and senior director of the AAAHC Institute. “We want to inform providers on the causes behind chronic opioid use and overdose, and present research-based guidelines on prescribing safer dosage.”

Guidelines to Fight an Epidemic

A Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) study found the chances of patients becoming chronic opioid users increased with each day of medication supplied, beginning with the third day, as well as a second prescription, high cumulative dosages or long-term prescriptions.ⁱⁱⁱ

AAAHC created the toolkit to address the specific concerns of primary and surgical care providers and advise on opioid prescription best practices and guidelines. In alignment with CDC guidelines on opioid prescribing and stewardship, the toolkit includes:

- Prescriber resources for calculating opioid safe dosage
- Assessment tool for gauging patient pain and function
- Primary care checklist when considering long-term opioid therapy and reassessment
- Surgical care checklist when addressing acute post-surgical/procedural pain
- Tips for discussing pain management options with patients

“Post-surgery pain management is not about achieving a specific pain score, but rather improving postoperative function and enabling rehabilitation while keeping the patient

comfortable,” said Kuznets. “Providers should assess both pharmacological resources as well as patient education when developing a perioperative pain management plan.”

The Opioid Stewardship Toolkit is available for purchase at <http://www.aaahc.org/en/institute> for \$10. For more information on opioid stewardship, other AAAHC resources or ASC accreditation, please visit www.aaahc.org.

About AAAHC

AAAHC (Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care), founded in 1979, is the leader in ambulatory health care accreditation with more than 6,000 organizations accredited. AAAHC accredits a wide range of outpatient settings including ambulatory surgery centers, office-based surgery facilities, endoscopy centers, student health centers, medical and dental group practices, community health centers, employer-based health clinics, retail clinics, and Indian health centers, among others.

AAAHC advocates for the provision of high quality health care through the development and adoption of nationally-recognized Standards. The non-profit provides a survey experience founded on a collaborative, consultative, educational approach to peer-based, on-site review. The AAAHC Certificate of Accreditation demonstrates an organization’s commitment to provide safe, high quality services to its patients. It is recognized by third party payers, medical professional associations, liability insurance companies, state and federal agencies, and the public.

For more information, visit www.aaahc.org.

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ⁱ Rudd RA, Seth P, David F, Scholl L. Increases in drug and opioid-involved overdose deaths—United States, 2010-2015. *MMWR*. 2016 Dec;65(50-51):1445-1452.

ⁱⁱ King NB, Fraser V, Bolkos C, Richardson R, Harper S. Determinants of increased opioid-related mortality in the United States and Canada, 1990-2013: A systematic review. *Am J Public Health*. 2014 Aug;104:e32-e42.

ⁱⁱⁱ Shah A, Hayes CJ, Martin BC. Characteristics of initial prescription episodes and likelihood of long-term opioid use – United States, 2006-2015. *MMWR Weekly*. March 17, 2017 / 66(10);265-269.