



## Pain Management & Opioids Key Messages

One of CPA's advocacy priorities for 2017 is the issue of opioid over-prescription in Canada. This is an issue on which physiotherapy can make an impact as an alternative or complement to pharmaceuticals, and offers an opportunity to leverage recent media coverage and public attention to advance the concept that “**physio can help**”. As you network with other health care providers, reach out to chronic pain support groups in your area, and educate community leaders, here are some key messages you can convey:

- **The increase in prescription opioid use is unmistakable.**  
According to the Globe and Mail, in 2015 health care providers wrote one prescription for opioid pain medication for every two Canadians
- **The risk for misusing prescription opioids is real.**  
According to the CIHI every day, 13 Canadians are hospitalized due to opioid poisoning, and almost 25% of them are over 65 years of age. Many more are treated in emergency rooms for misuse or overdose of opioids.
- **The risk for addiction is real.**  
According to the information presented at the Canadian Opioid Summit, more than 10% of people who receive prescription opioids struggle with addiction.
- **Physiotherapy is a safe and effective alternative to opioids for long-term pain management.**  
In March 2016, the CDC released guidelines urging non-opioid approaches for the management of chronic pain. In 2017, the National Pain Centre in Canada has released draft guidelines on the use of Opioids in Non-Cancer Pain- which state that non-opioid and non-pharmacological solutions should be optimized prior to starting a trial of opioids for pain management.
- **There are some situations in which opioid therapy is appropriate.**  
CPA acknowledges that opioids may be appropriate for some situations including cancer treatment, palliative care, end-of-life care, and certain acute care situations. Always consult with your doctor and/or pharmacist prior to decreasing or discontinuing your medication.
- **Patients have a choice about the kind of treatment they receive.**  
Before accepting a prescription for opioids, patients should talk to their health care providers about related risks and safer alternatives.



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