



Canadian Centre
on Substance Abuse
Centre canadien de lutte
contre les toxicomanies

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CCSA Applauds Opioid Guideline

Ottawa, May 8, 2017 — The Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse (CCSA), co-chair of the First Do No Harm executive committee, applauds today's release of the updated Canadian clinical guideline for physicians prescribing opioid medication to patients with chronic non-cancer pain — a significant and important step in a long and complicated process to help address the opioid crisis.

Recommendations in the guideline include considering the use of non-drug and non-opioid medicine before opioids, and exploring opioids on a trial-basis for patients who have not responded to non-opioid treatment and who do not have a current or past substance use disorder or other psychiatric disorder. There are also recommendations for dosage restrictions.

The guideline's recommendations for clinical practice have been developed by an international team of clinicians, researchers and patients, led by the Michael G. DeGroot National Pain Centre at McMaster University and funded by Health Canada and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research. The guideline and related material are available at [2017 Canadian Guideline for Opioids for Chronic Pain](#).

"The opioid crisis we're facing is complex and multi-faceted, and can only be resolved through collective action, if we are to tackle the crisis effectively. As part of the needed response, the team at McMaster University that developed this guideline relied on expert advice and extensive consultation with the field. The resulting product reflects best practices and the latest evidence to strike that balance between opioids' therapeutic properties and concerns for negative outcomes," said Rita Notarandrea, CEO of CCSA and co-chair of the First Do No Harm strategy. "The First Do No Harm strategy has a long-standing objective to promote appropriate prescribing and dispensing practices among healthcare practitioners, and this project exemplifies what can be accomplished when a community works together to get the job done and done right. I think we've made significant headway today."

To assist with increasing the knowledge of health professionals about pain management and addiction, and in the uptake of the guidelines, CCSA is proud to be part of the Pan-Canadian Collaborative on Education for Improved Opioid Prescribing. The collaborative is a partnership of eight organizations focused on educational resources for prescribers, with the objective of minimizing the harms associated with prescription opioids — including addiction, overdose and death — while ensuring Canadians have timely and appropriate access to optimal treatment for acute and chronic pain.

CCSA and the First Do No Harm executive committee remain heavily involved in ongoing work to address other aspects of the crisis. [First Do No Harm: Responding to Canada's Prescription Drug Crisis](#) is a pan-Canadian strategy with 58 recommendations focused on addressing the devastating harms associated with prescription drugs, and on improving the health and safety of all Canadian communities.

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CCSA was created by Parliament to provide national leadership to address substance use in Canada. A trusted counsel, we provide national guidance to decision makers by harnessing the power of research, curating knowledge and bringing together diverse perspectives.

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