

Pain Management

Effective pain management for patients with acute and chronic pain is a critical part of medical care, which includes safe prescribing practices to prevent misuse, addiction, and diversion. Providers must carefully navigate regulatory and public health guidelines without undermining patient access to necessary treatments.

Background and Rationale

Joint Commission included pain management standards as part of its accreditation process in 2001. In response to revised clinical practice guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)ⁱ and increasing regulation,ⁱⁱ Joint Commission and other stakeholders reevaluated existing approaches to pain management and prescribing practices to ensure the safe use of opioids and to optimize other pharmacologic and non-pharmacologic approaches to pain management. Joint Commission pain standards emphasize multimodal pain management strategies, require organizations to identify and monitor patients at high risk for opioid-related harm, and encourage non-pharmacologic and non-opioid pain treatments.ⁱⁱⁱ



Standards

The 2025 Joint Commission standards reflect consensus-based practices and guiding principles to ensure hospitals prioritize pain management and safe prescribing practices.^{iv}

As healthcare organizations are held accountable to regulatory and public health guidelines, Joint Commission standards establish a framework to help navigate the delicate balance of safe and effective patient care, guideline adherence, and community health.

The pain management and safe prescribing *National Performance Goal*[™] requires:

- Hospital leadership and clinical staff to work together to establish pain management and assessment, including safe opioid prescribing, as an organizational priority, including:
 - Leadership accountability
 - Monitoring
 - Staff education
 - Access to the Prescription Drug Monitoring databases
- Hospitals provide nonpharmacologic pain treatment modalities
- Hospitals assess and manage the patient's pain and minimize risk associated with treatment through:
 - Using defined criteria to screen, assess, and reassess
 - Identifying treatment strategies and treatment plans based on evidence-based practices that involve the patient
 - Monitoring patients identified as high risk for adverse outcomes and involving family in discharge planning and risks
 - Identifying opioid treatment programs and providing referrals where appropriate
- Hospitals collect and analyze data on pain assessment and management to increase safety and quality for patients



i Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Guideline Recommendations and Guiding Principles. <https://www.cdc.gov/overdose-prevention/hcp/clinical-guidance/recommendations-and-principles.html>. May 6, 2024.
ii US Department of Justice, Drug Enforcement Administration. Practitioner's Manual. An informational outline of the controlled substances Act. [https://deadiversion.usdoj.gov/GDP/\(DEA-DC-07\)\(EO-DEA226\)_Practitioner's_Manual_\(final\).pdf](https://deadiversion.usdoj.gov/GDP/(DEA-DC-07)(EO-DEA226)_Practitioner's_Manual_(final).pdf), Revised 2022. iii Joint Commission. R3 Report | Requirement, Rationale, Reference. Issue 11, August 29, 2017. https://www.jointcommission.org/-/media/tjc/documents/resources/pain-management/r3_report_issue_11_pain_assessment_2_11_19_rev.pdf iv Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Guideline Recommendations and Guiding Principles. <https://www.cdc.gov/overdose-prevention/hcp/clinical-guidance/recommendations-and-principles.html>. May 6, 2024.



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*National Patient Safety Goals are now a part of the National Performance Goals.