



New Regulations for Prescription Drugs to Help Washington State Fight Opioid Abuse

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With opioids being the center of a public health crisis, Washington State is enforcing new regulations for prescription drugs. Opioid overdose is currently the leading cause of accidental deaths and is now considered an epidemic.

Doctors say more than 700 people died in Washington last year due to opioid-related causes. This also includes a surge in Fentanyl overdoses. Statewide regulations are now being enforced to help crack down on opioid abuse. The new regulations are supposed to monitor and regulate every prescription. Now there is a mandatory statewide tracking system.

?The general idea is to cut down the number of opioids prescribed for any acute use,? said Dr. Khushboo Mehta with Kaiser-Permanente in Redmond. ?For example, if you had a minor surgery today, the number of opioids in the past would be 30, 40. But now it is limited to a 10-day supply and now it has to be justified to how frequently the patient is taking them.?

All Washington doctors are now required to track who gets prescription drugs and how much. This will ensure

that doctors don't over-prescribe medications for patients. However, the problem is also more complicated as some patients require larger amounts of opioids for severe pain. Click the link to see Boston's top rehab placement programs.

Now that there are new regulations in place, patients can only get a 10-day supply of opioids such as oxycodone, even though some may need a 25-day supply. Some patients are expressing frustration over the difficulty of securing opioids. Still, most patients understand why the changes had to be made.

"It's definitely a step in right direction," said Dr. Mehta. Dr. Mehta was on the task force to develop procedures and policies for opioid prescriptions for the Kaiser-Permanente. They believe that the new statewide rules could make a big difference. "It's really helpful because it minimizes the leftover opioids that are staying in patient's homes or the risk of mixing them or taking too much of them."

"The rules are designed to prevent poor prescribing," said Dr. Alden Roberts, general surgeon, and chair of the Washington Medical Commission. "New rules to opioid prescribing is one aspect of management of an opioid crisis. But opioid crisis needs multidisciplinary process if it's actually going to be improved. We're beginning to see some improvements, but we have a long way to go."

Washington state doctors are also legally required to take extra classes to learn about opioid overuse. These classes are meant to teach them about what to prescribe and what not to prescribe. Although doctors are already aware of these things, making the necessary changes will still require some adjustments on their part.

Tackling the opioid crisis will involve lots of decision making on their part because some patients are in need of opioids due to chronic and severe pain. Doctors will have to follow these new regulations and make sure their patients are also aware of the current opioid epidemic.

Thousands are dying from opioid-related overdose all over the country, and changes must be made in order to address the situation. The new regulations are supposed to keep the situation under control. Meanwhile, people who are already addicted still need care and attention—as well as medical assistance from addiction experts.

If someone in the family is struggling with opioid addiction, it is important to seek help. A combination of medical detox and behavioral therapy can go a long way in the fight against drug abuse. But because every individual is affected by addiction differently, a comprehensive program tailored to their specific needs is necessary. Look for a nearby addiction treatment facility today and find out how drug treatment programs work.

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