

CALGARY ZONE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER: FEBRUARY 2019

Frameworks: Opioids & chronic pain

A family physician's guide to opioids-related resources and tools available in the Calgary area

New fiscal year

The newsletter:

Welcome to the fourth edition of our monthly Calgary Zone newsletter.

As we near the beginning of a new fiscal year it's a great opportunity to reset and get ready for the next 12 months of work under the Calgary Zone Opioid grant.

In this newsletter we introduce the first of three frameworks and share another Q&A with Dr. Christine Luelo, Medical Director with the South Calgary PCN.

Contact us

Questions? Email

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Frameworks



Whether we are initiating, continuing, or tapering medication, talking about opioids with your patient is central to efforts to develop a sustainable response to this crisis.

Discussing the benefits, risks and expectations (e.g. functional goals, opioid contract, prescribing specific amounts for a specific number of days) right from the beginning helps to minimize challenges in the future by establishing boundaries and limits with our patients.

We would like to introduce you to the first of three frameworks that offer tools and outline the College of Physicians & Surgeons of Alberta Standards of Practice.

The frameworks can be used alongside the Alberta Medical Association's change packages.

Opioid Framework:

Management of
Continuing opioids

WITH TEAM

WITHOUT TEAM

Watch this space: Frameworks for initiation and post-operative followup and tapering will be shared in the March and April newsletters.

Other helpful resources:

- 1) Online pain calculator: [The C-TOP Tool](#)
- 2) Chronic pain tele-advice: [Specialist LINK](#)

Q&A with Dr. Christine Luelo

Q: I've been scared off prescribing. What should I do?

A: Opioids are not "bad" drugs. They can be dangerous but still have a place in the care of patients in family practice. We have likely been prescribing them too much in North America and there are lots of reasons for that. Our patients deserve our empathy and care and we should work with them to decide on what is best in their individual situation. Download a patient handout on opioid safety for patients with [acute pain](#) or [chronic pain](#) that can help support your conversations with patients.

Q. Can I get paid for having these conversations with patients?

A: The billing code for a patient previously assessed through a multidisciplinary pain clinic being followed in medical home is 03.050 (direct management, re-assessment, education and/or general counselling of a patient with chronic pain, per 15 minutes or portion thereof).

Q. What role does naloxone play in family practice?

A: Consider writing a prescription for a naloxone kit whenever you write a prescription for a narcotic (view a [map](#) of clinics distributing kits). At the very least have a discussion about why harm reduction is important. Everyone should hear about harm reduction strategies.

Dr. Christine Luelo is a Calgary family physician and South Calgary PCN's Medical Director