

The Opioid Crisis

The *College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario* (CPSO) tells us that Canada has the second highest rate of opioid prescribing/use per capita in the world. Canada is currently experiencing an opioid crisis with escalating death rates due to overdose and misuse. Opioid abuse and misuse are highly complex issues that involve both illicit and prescription drugs. The CPSO tells us: “While prescription opioids are an important and useful therapeutic tool for select patients with certain conditions, prescription opioids carry risks, even when prescribed and used appropriately”. There are many reasons for the opioid crisis. These include socioeconomic factors, the increased availability of illicit drugs that are unsafe and a gap in the availability of services to support people with chronic pain, mental health and addiction. Sometimes, well-meaning Physicians and Nurse Practitioners have contributed to this problem through over-prescribing.

References: Related Policies and Legislation

- Policy Statement #7-16, Prescribing Drugs, College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (CPSO)
- Practice Standard: Medication, College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO)
- Opioid Position Statement, College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (CPSO)
- Food and Drugs Act, R.S.C, 1985, c. F-27
- Controlled Drugs and Substances Act, S.C. 1996, c. 19
- Narcotics Safety and Awareness Act, 2010, S.O. 2010, c. 22
- Drug and Pharmacies Regulation Act, R.S.O.1990, c. H.4.
- Carea CHC New Client Intake Policy



The Opioid Crisis

Understanding Carea CHC's Medication (Controlled Substance) Prescribing Policy.



Carea Community Health Centre and our staff are dedicated to creating an inclusive environment that welcomes diversity. Every One Matters! Every One Is Welcome!

Accessibility: Carea Community Health Centre is committed to complying with all applicable standards as set out in the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA). If you have accessibility needs and require alternate formats or other accommodations please contact the Resource Development and Communications Manager at 905-723-0036 x1229 or info@careachc.ca

www.careachc.ca

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**Positive
Space**

Lesbian Gay Bisexual
Transgender Queer



Carea's MST and Our Clients:

Working Together to Prevent Death, Misuse and Addiction.

If you are a registered and *rostered* client of Carea's Medical Services Team (MST), you will already know that medications are often an important part of your treatment and recovery plan. If you have been prescribed medication by one of our Nurse Practitioners (Nurse Practitioner) or Physicians, you have already collaborated with your Nurse Practitioner or Physician in a *treatment* plan that includes medication.

Carea CHC requires our Nurse Practitioners and Physicians to be members in good-standing with their regulatory Colleges: *the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (CPSO) and the College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO)*. Both of these Colleges have a mandate to serve and protect the public. In other words, our Physicians and Nurse Practitioners are required – as a condition of their licensing – to follow their College regulations, policies and practices. Some of these College regulations, policies and practices are meant to ensure that our clients are safe whenever they have been prescribed medications.

Medication prescribing is also governed by a complex legal framework. In addition to the expectations of their Colleges, Physicians and Nurse Practitioners must be aware of, and comply with relevant requirements for medications and prescribing that are required by other related laws and regulations (for more information, please see the References later in this brochure).

To address the opioid crisis, Carea's Board, CEO, Clinical Director and management teams have approved and implemented *Carea's Medication (Controlled Substance) Prescribing Policy*.

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The purpose of our *Medication (Controlled Substance) Prescribing Policy* is to ensure that Carea clients who are prescribed and/or seeking a medication (i.e., especially an opioid or narcotic) are treated respectfully and that we support our Nurse Practitioners and Physicians in their efforts to provide safe, best-practice, evidence-based and evidence-informed care.

Carea does not provide acute or urgent care medical services: we are not a hospital or a walk-in clinic or crisis centre. Our Medical Services Team (MST) provide ongoing primary care health care services *by appointment* for clients who are *registered* and *rostered* with a Nurse Practitioner or Physician. Once you are *rostered* with an Nurse Practitioner or Physician, you have agreed to become an active member of your own health care team at Carea CHC. This means that you are agreeing to receive your primary health care at Carea CHC. For more information on how to become an MST client at Carea CHC, please see our Medical Services Team (MST) brochure or our website.

If you are **not** a registered and rostered Carea CHC MST client, our Physicians and Nurse Practitioners cannot provide new prescriptions or prescription renewals for any medication. Once you become a registered and rostered MST client, your Nurse Practitioner or Physician will assess your health care needs.

Please note that Carea CHC Nurse Practitioners and Physicians **will not** prescribe narcotics and/or other controlled-substances during your intake appointment and not before they have received your medical records from your previous health care provider (e.g., family doctor). As a new client, your Nurse Practitioner or Physician will ask you for your written consent to obtain your medical records from your previous health care provider(s).

For both current and new clients, Carea Physicians and Nurse Practitioners) will not prescribe narcotics/controlled-substances until all of the following conditions have been satisfied:

- + The Carea CHC Physician or Nurse Practitioner has received medical records from your previous health care provider (e.g., family doctor);
- + The Carea CHC Physician or Nurse Practitioner has completed their independent assessment(s)/screening etc.
- + The Carea CHC Physician or Nurse Practitioner is satisfied that a continuation of the medication is warranted according to safe, best-practice, evidence-based and evidence-informed care and regulatory requirements.
- + The client has signed a Carea CHC Medication *Treatment Agreement*. Your Nurse Practitioner or Physician will provide you with this form.

Carea Physicians and Nurse Practitioners may also require that new and existing clients be assessed for substance misuse or addiction risk. If a medication misuse or addiction concern is identified, Carea CHC Physicians and Nurse Practitioners will perform brief interventions and/or make appropriate referrals for clients to have addiction(s) assessments and/or counselling/treatment.

A Carea CHC Physician or Nurse Practitioner may require a client to sign a *Medication Treatment Agreement* for any controlled substance at any time while the client is receiving primary health care services at Carea CHC. However, all Carea CHC clients who are specifically prescribed *narcotics* (e.g., opioids) will be required to sign a *Medication Treatment Agreement*. The Physician or Nurse Practitioner will co-sign the agreement with their client. Your Nurse Practitioner or Physician will be happy to review the agreement with you and we encourage our clients to ask questions.