

## ***PRESCRIBER ALERT***

**Dear Utah Prescriber,**

The State of Utah, Department of Commerce, Division of Occupational and Professional Licensing affirms the responsibility of physicians and other clinical practitioners to assess and treat patients' pain, and acknowledges the essential role of opioid (narcotic) analgesic medications in pain management. The Division of Occupational and Professional Licensing encourages pain management for the relief of human suffering and promotes the proper prescribing of opioid analgesic medications in all clinical settings.

In the United States, there has been increased attention to relief of pain and suffering with progress in pain management, and greater prescribing of controlled substances including opioid analgesic medications.

Recent trends of increasing abuse and diversion of prescription medications and associated deaths have been attributed in part to practitioner ignorance and patient noncompliance. There is common misunderstanding of the pharmacodynamics and pharmacokinetics of opioids, especially methadone, combined with pressure to prescribe methadone as an analgesic due to its low cost. Utah has reported a series of deaths related specifically to the misuse of methadone.

Prescribers with little or no experience prescribing opioids are therefore encouraged to consult a qualified pain specialist when initiating opioid therapy, especially with methadone.

**The Division of Occupational and Professional Licensing on recommendation of the Physicians Licensing Board endorses the Federation of State Medical Boards of the United States, Inc. "*Model Policy for the Use of Controlled Substances for the Treatment of Pain (2004)*," ([www.fsmb.org](http://www.fsmb.org))**

The Division of Occupational and Professional Licensing (DOPL) also endorses the following recommendations made by the Physicians Licensing Board.

Prescribers should:

- Make proper diagnosis of painful conditions, recommend multimodality treatments as indicated, and follow documentation standards as outlined in the Federation of State Medical Boards *Model Policy*
- Maintain security of controlled substances prescriptions and controlled substances
- Use the DOPL Controlled Substances Data Base to identify multiple prescribers of controlled substances for an individual patient
- Collaborate with pharmacists and other health care professionals to ensure patient compliance and safety

### **Web Sites:**

- DOPL Controlled Substances Data Base: [csdb.utah.gov](http://csdb.utah.gov)
- Federation of State Medical Boards: [www.fsmb.org](http://www.fsmb.org)
- Utah Medical Association: [www.utahmed.org](http://www.utahmed.org)
- University of Wisconsin Pain and Policy Studies Group: [www.painpolicy.wisc.edu](http://www.painpolicy.wisc.edu)

**Signed, Physicians Licensing Board, June 2007**