



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**March 16, 2017**

[View Online](#)

## **Governor Wolf Joins Pittsburgh Steelers Legend Franco Harris to Announce New Opioid Prescribing Guideline Recommendations for Orthopedics and Sports Medicine**

**Pittsburgh, PA** – Today, Governor Tom Wolf and former Pittsburgh Steeler Franco Harris, joined state and local leaders at University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC) Montefiore to announce new prescribing guideline recommendations for the safe and effective use of opioids in orthopedics and sports medicine.

“These new guidelines are a crucial part of our battle against the opioid crisis in Pennsylvania,” said Governor Wolf. “By partnering with health care professionals in the fields of orthopedics and sports medicine to reduce the overprescribing of opioid painkillers, we are working to reduce opioid abuse in one of the highest-risk groups – people who seek medical care due to injuries.”

At the event Harris discussed his experience and offered support of the governor’s mission to fighting the opioid epidemic.

“Everyday we’re reminded we have a tough fight on our hands,” said Franco Harris. “But you should know that with the governor and this administration that there is no time and effort they will not give to fighting this epidemic.”

Pennsylvania Physician General Dr. Rachel Levine and UPMC Orthopedic Surgeon Dr. Patrick Smith also provided remarks about how the new guidelines will help reduce the over-prescription of opioids in Pennsylvania.

The [Safe Prescribing of Opioids in Orthopedics and Sports Medicine guidelines](#) address the use of opioid pain medication in orthopedics and sports medicine. They are intended to help health care providers improve patient outcomes and to supplement, but not replace, the individual provider’s

clinical judgment.

Under Governor Wolf's leadership, the departments of Health and Drug and Alcohol Programs have convened the Safe and Effective Prescribing Practices Task Force. Membership of the task force includes various state agencies, representatives from medical associations, provider advocates, and community members.

The task force has now developed and adopted guidelines for nine medical specialties on the safe and effective use of opioids in the treatment of pain:

- Emergency Department Pain Treatment Guidelines: To appropriately relieve pain and attempt to identify those who maybe be abusing or addicted to opioid analgesics and refer them for special assistance.
- Opioid Use and Safe Prescribing for Geriatric Pain: To highlight special problems concerning using opioids when treating older adults for chronic non-cancer pain.
- Guidelines on the Use of Opioids to Treat Chronic Non-cancer Pain: To address the use of opioids for the treatment of chronic non-cancer pain. These guidelines do not address the use of opioids for acute pain, nor do they address the use of opioids for the treatment of pain at the end-of-life.
- Guidelines on the Use of Opioids in a Dental Practice: To address the use of opioids for the treatment of acute dental pain.
- Obstetrics and Gynecology Pain Treatment: To address the use of opioids for the treatment of pain in pregnant patients, during and immediately following delivery, and during breastfeeding.
- Opioid Dispensing Guidelines: To focus on several key areas that can impact pharmacists of any practice setting. Focal points include assessing the appropriateness of opioid pain medication at the point of dispensing, recognition of "red flags" on prescriptions as well as high risk medication combinations, available resources for those with a substance use disorder, and methods to prevent diversion from the emergency department.
- Guideline on Use of Addiction Treatment Medications in The Treatment of Pregnant Patients with Opioid Use Disorder: To address treatment for opioid use disorders during pregnancy and is intended to help health care providers improve patient outcomes when caring for these patients.
- Guidelines on Safe Prescribing of Benzodiazepines for Acute Treatment of Anxiety and Insomnia: To address the use of benzodiazepines for the treatment of anxiety and insomnia.
- The Safe Prescribing of Opioids in Orthopedics and Sports Medicine.

If you or someone you know is suffering from the disease of addiction, call 1-800-

662-HELP or visit [www.pa.gov/opioids](http://www.pa.gov/opioids) for treatment options. For more information on the fight against opioid abuse in Pennsylvania, visit the Department of Health website at [www.health.pa.gov](http://www.health.pa.gov) or follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

**MEDIA CONTACT:** JJ Abbott, 717.783.1116