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Wolf Administration Introduces Opioid Prescribing Guidelines for Workers' Compensation

Harrisburg, PA – The Wolf Administration today introduced opioid prescribing guidelines for workers' compensation to help health care providers determine when opioids are appropriate for treatment of someone injured on the job.

"In 2017, there were more than 17,000 workers' compensation claims made in Pennsylvania, and our state ranks third highest in the nation in the percentage of injured workers who become long-term opioid users," Governor Tom Wolf said. "These prescribing guidelines will help to ensure that health care providers who treat patients with work-related injuries have the guidance they need. I thank the members of the Prescribing Guidelines Task Force for all of their hard work in developing this essential guidance."

The guidelines are designed to:

- Promote delivery of safe, quality health care to injured workers;
- Ensure patient pain relief and functional improvement;
- Be used in conjunction with other treatment guidelines, not in lieu of other recommended treatment;
- Prevent and reduce the number of complications caused by prescription medication, including addiction; and
- Recommend opioid prescribing practices that promote functional restoration.

"The workers' compensation prescribing guidelines are intended to supplement, not replace clinical judgment," Secretary of Health Dr. Rachel Levine said. "These prescribing guidelines add to the 10 others we have developed for health care practitioners like dentists, OB/GYN and emergency room physicians. We are constantly reviewing and updating these guidelines as medical research and evidence move the science forward."

The guidelines include recommendations for the treatment of acute, subacute and post-operative pain; and treatment of chronic pain.

There are now 11 prescribing guidelines for health care providers including:

- Worker's Compensation Prescribing Guidelines;
- Treating Chronic Non-Cancer Pain;

- Emergency Department Pain Treatment Guidelines;
- Opioids in Dental Practice;
- Opioid Dispensing Guidelines;
- Obstetrics and Gynecology Opioid Prescribing Guidelines;
- Geriatric Pain;
- Use of Addiction Treatment Medications in the Treatment of Pregnant Patients with Opioid-Use Disorder;
- Safe Prescribing Benzodiazepines for Acute Treatment of Anxiety and Insomnia;
- Safe Prescribing Guidelines for Orthopedics and Sports Medicine; and
- Safe Prescribing of Opioids in Pediatric and Adolescent Populations.

For more information about the Wolf Administration's response to the opioid crisis, visit www.pa.gov/opioids. To view the prescribing guidelines, [click here](#).

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