The American Dental Association (ADA) recommends that dentists:

- Follow CDC guidelines for opioid prescribing
- Use nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory analgesics as first-line therapy for acute pain
- Check the state prescription drug monitoring program when prescribing opioids
- Discuss opioid safety, storage and disposal with patients
- Participate in continuing education on opioid prescribing (2018, Version 1)

NC Opioid Action Plan Focus Areas

The NC Dental Opioid Action Plan aligns with the NC Opioid Action Plan to implement complementary strategies in the following focus areas:

1. **COORDINATED INFRASTRUCTURE**
   - **Strategy:** Leadership
   - **Action:** Convene stakeholders to lead implementation of the NC Dental Opioid Action Plan
   - **Leads:** NCDHHS facilitates the OPDAAC Dental Workgroup meetings

2. **REDUCE OVERSUPPLY OF PRESCRIPTION DRUGS**
   - **Strategy:** Safe prescribing policies
   - **Action:** Create and maintain continuing education opportunities and resources for practicing dentists with an emphasis on safer pain management and identifying people at risk of substance use disorder and referring for diagnosis and treatment
   - **Leads:** NCBDE, NCDS, NCSOMS, NCDHA, UNC, ECU, HPU, NCCDP

   - **Strategy:** CSRS utilization
   - **Action:** Register 100% of eligible dental prescribers in NC CSRS
   - **Leads:** NCBDE, NCDHHS

   - **Action:** Offer training in all dental, dental hygiene, and dental assistant schools on safer pain management and identifying people at risk of substance use disorder and referring for diagnosis and treatment
   - **Leads:** ECU, UNC, NCDHA, NCDAA, NCCDP

3. **REDUCE DIVERSION AND FLOW OF ILLICIT DRUGS**
   - **Strategy:** Dental personnel diversion prevention
   - **Action:** Implement model diversion prevention protocols within dental school clinics and dental practices
   - **Leads:** UNC, NCDS, NCCDP

   - **Strategy:** Special population: Youth
   - **Action:** Reduce the number of opioid prescriptions for youth (e.g., codeine to children, opioids for third molar extraction)
   - **Leads:** NCSOMS, NCAPD, UNC

4. **INCREASE COMMUNITY AWARENESS AND PREVENTION**
   - **Strategy:** Medicaid and commercial payer policies
   - **Action:** Support coverage of non-opioid modalities for management of acute postoperative pain (e.g., Exparel)
   - **Leads:** NCSOMS, NCDHHS, UNC

5. **EXPAND TREATMENT AND RECOVERY-ORIENTED SYSTEMS OF CARE**
   - **Strategy:** Drug takeback, disposal, and safe storage
   - **Action:** Educate patients on safe storage and disposal of opioids
   - **Leads:** NCDHHS, NCDS, NCDHA, UNC, NCCDP

6. **MEASURE OUR IMPACT AND REVISE STRATEGIES BASED ON RESULTS**
4. INCREASE COMMUNITY AWARENESS AND PREVENTION

**Strategy:** Public education campaign

**Action:** Launch or promote an education campaign about safe pain management, the efficacy of non-opioid pain modalities, and safe storage and disposal of opioids. Consider coordinating with NCDHHS statewide messaging campaigns (e.g., CDC Rx Awareness or SAMHSA’s Lock Your Meds campaigns)

**Leads:** NCDHHS, NCBDE, NCDS, ONSDS, NCAPD, NCDHA, UNC, ECU, HPU

5. EXPAND TREATMENT ACCESS AND RECOVERY SUPPORTS

**Strategy:** Care linkages

**Action:** Encourage coordination with pain specialists when prescribing opioids for management of chronic orofacial pain

**Leads:** NCDS, NCSOMS, UNC

**Action:** Link patients screened at risk for SUD to services

**Leads:** ECU, UNC

**Strategy:** Support patient recovery

**Action:** Utilize best practices in pain management options to prevent exacerbation of or relapse of opioid use disorders among people with OUD or in recovery for OUD

**Leads:** UNC

6. MEASURE IMPACT

**Strategy:** Metrics/Data

**Action:** Create a data dashboard of key metrics

**Leads:** DPH IVP, UNC

**Strategy:** Research/ Evaluation

**Action:** Establish an opioid research agenda among NC dental schools and academic research institutions to inform future and evaluate existing work

**Leads:** UNC

**Acronyms**

| CDC: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention | NCCDP: NC Caring Dental Professionals |
| CSRS: Controlled Substances Reporting System | NCDAA: NC Dental Assistants Association |
| DPH: Division of Public Health | NCDHA: NC Dental Hygienists’ Association |
| ECU: East Carolina University School of Dental Medicine | NCDHHS: Department of Health and Human Services |
| IVP: Injury and Violence Prevention Branch | NCDS: NC Dental Society |
| HPU: High Point University Workman School of Dental Medicine | NCSOMS: NC Society of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons |
| NC: North Carolina | ONSDS: Old North State Dental Society |
| NCAPD: NC Academy of Pediatric Dentistry | SUD: Substance Use Disorder |
| NCBDE: NC Board of Dental Examiners | UNC: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Dentistry |

Many dental health organizations in NC are working to address the opioid overdose epidemic....