



Combating Wisconsin's Opioid Epidemic with Data-driven Leadership Resources for Community Surgeons

The Problem

- Opioid overdoses are a leading cause of death in Wisconsin.
- Wisconsin's age-adjusted, per capita rate of opioid-related deaths (15.2 per 100,000 in 2015) consistently exceeds national averages.
- Emergency department visits for opioid overdoses in Wisconsin increased 109% from 2016 to 2017
- The most common path to opioid addiction is access to legally prescribed opioid pain medications, and surgeons are among the most common sources of those prescriptions.
- There is enormous variation in the prescribing practices of individual surgeons for common, standard general surgery operations. Most patients, when surveyed, take much less opioid pain medication than prescribed.
- Existing prescription monitoring tools such as the Physician Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP) do not provide benchmark data to surgeons about their prescribing practices and do not provide any longitudinal data about patients' opioid use after surgery.
- Without those data, surgeons are not able to make informed decisions about their own prescribing practices or advocate for change within their own communities.

How can SCW improve opioid prescribing practices?

- Engage and partner with statewide leaders as stakeholders in the opioid reduction effort by sharing resources, educational materials, and data
- Analyze opioid prescription fills following surgical procedures in Wisconsin to identify best practices and opportunities for education and prescription reduction
- Distribute surgeon-level prescribing reports with statewide benchmarks to surgeons
- Create telementoring/collaborative distance learning and in-person opportunities to discuss and refine best practices for opioid prescribing. SCW will host regular teleconferences and in-person meetings with participating surgeons to identify challenges and innovations in reducing unnecessary opioid prescriptions.

How will SCW measure success?

- Using data from the Wisconsin Health Information Organization (WHIO), SCW will be able to analyze prescribing practices of participating physicians and non-participating physicians to compare change over time.
- Regular teleconferences and in-person meetings will provide regular opportunities for qualitative feedback on the success of the program.

What is required for participation?

- Any surgeon in Wisconsin is invited to participate and receive an individual report.
- Participating institutions will also be provided with community-level summary reports to inform policy development at the local level.