

Please read the following letter about Olympic Medical Physicians Primary Care Clinic's updated approach to prescribing opioid pain medications.

Dear Patients,

Our providers and staff are concerned about the opioid epidemic in our country and in Clallam County. We know that many members of our community are as well.

We are asking for your attention to this matter. We are sending this letter to all households within our practice to increase awareness.

Opioids, also known as narcotics, include prescription pain medications. Many opioids exist. Some examples are Vicodin, OxyContin, Percocet, Ultram, morphine, methadone, oxycodone, hydrocodone, fentanyl, codeine, tramadol, and heroin.

There is much medical evidence that using opioids for conditions besides acute pain (which tends to go away in about 10 days) is not helpful, and can be harmful in many different ways. One of these harms is *opioid dependence*.

Opioid dependence is most easily understood as a person's desire to avoid withdrawal symptoms. One can develop dependence after taking opioids every day for just two weeks. People who are dependent on opioids become more sensitive to pain, and often feel like they need more pain medicine. It is possible for opioid dependence to lead to *opioid use disorder*.

Opioid Use Disorder (some refer to this as addiction) is a disease where someone experiences cravings and has trouble controlling drug use. Research shows that many people who have opioid use disorder started out by receiving prescriptions from their health care providers for acute or chronic pain.

Like other community providers, we will no longer *routinely* prescribe opiates for non-cancer-related chronic pain. We will be working closely with our patients currently taking opioids to make sure their pain is appropriately treated. We understand this change may be uncomfortable and unwanted, but medical research is very clear regarding the risks and lack of long term benefit of these medications.

If you have questions about our approach to opioids, we welcome you to ask your primary provider at your next appointment.

Thank you for trusting Olympic Medical Physicians as your partner in health care.

Sincerely,

Your OMP Primary Care Team

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