



## Sojourns' Opioid Policy Agreement

One of our foundational medical principles is to "First, Do No Harm". We see this as a very broad statement that encompasses immediate and long-term perspectives, individuals and communities, as well as local and wider ecosystems. With this in mind, and with what we now know about the many problems caused by opioid medications in the world today, we have adopted the following restrictive policy regarding the prescribing of opioid medications.

**Sojourns practitioners do not prescribe opioid medications for the treatment of chronic pain. In rare acute cases, a practitioner may prescribe enough pain medication to treat a patient's pain for up to six weeks.**

We believe that there are a variety of effective ways to address pain without using pharmaceuticals, and recognize pain management as an important part of what we do to help our patients at times. If you have any questions about our policy, or what we have to offer, we will be more than happy to discuss this with you.

### Risk of Opioid Medication

These medications have potential risks, the most significant being:

1. Physical dependence which means stopping the medication suddenly could lead to withdrawal symptoms such as abdominal cramping, diarrhea, anxiety, seizures and death.
2. Psychological dependence or addiction, which means that one's behavior can become focused on obtaining additional opioid medications. Individuals who have addictions are often unaware of their addictions.
3. Overdose of the opioid medication leading to respiratory arrest and death.
4. These medications can have a variety of other adverse side effects, including nausea, constipation, depression, problems urinating, sexual dysfunction, and testicular atrophy.
5. Additional side effects of these drugs may be confusion, sedation, drowsiness, problems with coordination and changes in thinking ability. This may make it unsafe to drive a vehicle, operate hazardous equipment or do other dangerous activities. Operating a motor vehicle while taking these medications may be grounds for a DUI citation.

There are less direct risks also associated with the widespread use of opioid medications. These include risks to others in the community due to increased availability, possibly leading to accidental overdoses, theft or violent crime. There are environmental downsides as well since the substances and metabolites, as well as byproducts of the manufacturing process, are persistent and bioactive. This means the use of these medications can affect waterways and wildlife in unpredictable ways.

*I have read Sojourns' Opioid Policy. I understand that my practitioner at Sojourns will not prescribe opioid medications to manage chronic pain.*

Patients signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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