

## About OptumRx

OptumRx is a pharmacy care services company helping clients and more than 65 million members achieve better health outcomes and lower overall costs through innovative prescription drug benefits services. OptumRx is part of Optum®, a leading information and technology-enabled health services business dedicated to making the health system work better for everyone. For more information, visit [optum.com/optumrx](https://optum.com/optumrx).

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## Strengthen your clinical program strategy

To learn more about OptumRx Opioid Risk Management and our clinical strategy, contact your OptumRx representative or send an email to [optumrx@optum.com](mailto:optumrx@optum.com).

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1. Denisco RC et al, Prevention of Opioid Abuse: The Role of the Dentist, Journal of the American Dental Association, JADA 142 (7), July 2011.
2. CDC Guideline for Prescribing Opioids for Chronic Pain — United States, 2016, Recommendations and Reports / March 18, 2016 / 65(1);1–49.
3. American Dental Association, Statement on the Use of Opioids in the Treatment of Dental Pain, ADA House of Delegates, October 2016.
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5. Cicero TJ, Ellis MS, Surratt HL, Kurtz SP. The changing face of heroin use in the United States: a retrospective analysis of the past 50 years. JAMA Psychiatry. 2014;71(7):821-826.
6. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Annual Surveillance Report of Drug-Related Risks and Outcomes, United States, 2017).
7. Maughan, BC et al, Drug Alcohol Depend. 2016 Nov 1;168:328-334.

# The role of dentists in managing opioids

How the dental community and OptumRx are working together to address the opioid epidemic.



# The United States is facing an opioid epidemic.

To help address the epidemic, OptumRx is working closely with dentists and other health care stakeholders to more clearly understand the extent of the problem and collaborate to develop solutions.

## How dentists have an opportunity to help

OptumRx encourages dentists to become familiar with, and implement in their practices, current guidelines from the American Dental Association (ADA), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other health organizations.<sup>1,2,3</sup>

### It is important for dentists to:



- Look for opportunities to prescribe alternative medications.
- If opioids are necessary, write prescriptions for the minimum appropriate dosage and number of days.
- Have candid conversations with patients on appropriate use, storage and disposal of opioids.

**4.5M** Americans are estimated to have a substance use disorder with opioid prescription painkillers.<sup>4</sup>

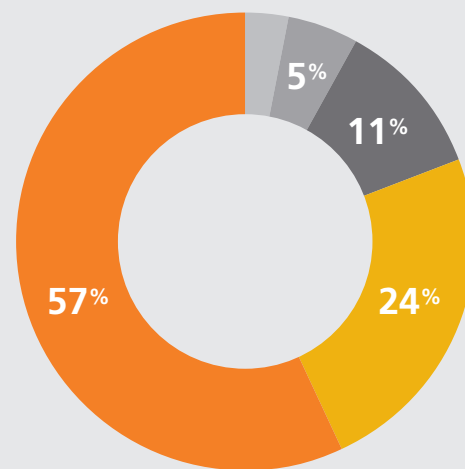
**75%** of opioid abusers started by taking prescribed medications, while that is true for 80% of heroin users.<sup>5</sup>

**70%** of misused opioid prescriptions were obtained, stolen or purchased from a friend or relative.<sup>6</sup>

## Dentist efforts to decrease opioid prescriptions have lagged behind other health care professionals.

10% of prescriptions made by dentists are opioids for:<sup>7</sup>

- Oral Surgery & Implants
- Exams & X-rays
- Endodontics
- Restorative



41% of prescriptions exceed the three-day supply guideline for acute pain.<sup>7</sup>

In 2016, the ADA approved a statement on opioid use in dental pain treatment. Recommendations for dentists included:



**Conduct** a thorough medical and dental history to determine current medications, potential drug interactions and potential for substance abuse.



**Follow** federal and state licensing board guidelines for safe opioid prescribing.



**Discuss** with patients their role in preventing misuse and abuse, and the storage and disposal of opioids.



**Consider** non-steroidal analgesics as first-line therapy for the management of acute pain.



**Coordinate** with other treating doctors, including pain specialists, in the treatment of chronic facial pain.



**Encourage** dentists, along with dental students and residents, to seek continuing education in addiction and pain management specific to opioid prescribing.

In addition to supporting professional guidelines, OptumRx is working to:

- **Manage opioid prescriptions** for both acute and chronic pain through ongoing monitoring of factors such as the frequency of prescriptions, number of days the medication is being prescribed and the prescription strength.
- **Partner with key stakeholders** in managing opioid prevention and treatment through analytics and active engagement. This includes patient education and partnership with government as well as professional and consumer groups actively involved in trying to combat the opioid epidemic.