ER visits involve adverse reaction to drugs taken as prescribed.

In 2008, population 12 and younger numbered 211,209. One-fifth of this number had been patients 70 and older.

Opioids are drugs that have derived from the opium plant. More than 20 distinct alkaloids can be obtained. The three main phenanthrenes are morphine, codeine, and thebaine.

Pain Versus Stigma
• Nearly a third of Americans experience long-lasting pain–the kind that lingers for weeks to months– and feel the stigma rather than relief from a health care system poorly prepared to treat them. (Institute of Medicine).
• Chronic pain costs 558 billion a year in medical bills, sick days, and lost productivity.
• Too many patients believe that “a pill is the answer.”
• Far more likely for the patient with pain to get inadequate care than for a drug-seeker to walk out with an inappropriate prescription.

Pain Control Issues
• Lack of Consistency in care, treatment, follow-up. Pain management caused by different perceptions too rigid or too flexible.
• Lack of prescriptive vigilance.
• Inadequate use of pain contracts.
• Failure to use urine screens.
• Prolonged length of treatment using chronic pain medications.
• Failure to implement pain management referrals.
• Non-adherence to policy for refill requests.
• Lack of utilizing non-opioids and alternative medical therapy.
• Lack of consistency in reasons for dismissal.

Pain Control Guidelines
1. Prior to initiating chronic and for short–term opioids, can the pain be treated with other medications or modalities?
• Has a non-opioid been prescribed? Examples include NSAID’s, acetaminophen, muscle relaxants, Neurontin.
• Have alternatives modalities been considered? Examples include acupuncture, massage, whirlpools, physical therapy.
• Resources: American Pain Society, Up-to-Date, American Academy of Pain Medicine (www.painmed.org).

Key Provisions of New Pain Contract
• Has the patient receive a copy?
• Has the patient documented which pharmacy he/she uses?
• Has the patient been seen within the last three months?
• Has the patient agreed not to accept any narcotic and/or controlled substance from another physician?
• Has the patient been informed that he/she will phone PCP within one week to report an ER visit?
• Has the patient agreed to be responsible to make sure that he/she does not run out of medication on the weekend and holidays?
• Has the patient been informed that he/she will obtain refills during regular office hours. PCP may take up to 72 hours or three business days (M-F) to refill the medication?
• Has the patient agreed to keep the prescribed controlled medications in a safe place?
• Does the patient understand that the PCP will not supply additional refills if any of his/her medication is dispensed other than through the PCP?
• Has the patient known that if a prescription is stolen the PCP will only refill the medication(s) if a copy of the police report has been provided?
• Has the patient agreed that he/she will not give, sell, or trade prescriptions to anyone else?
• Does the patient agree that the given information is correct?
• Has the police consented to provide a urine screen as requested by PCP?
• Has the patient agreed to bring the medication(s) for a requested pill count?
• Has the patient been informed that if his/her urine contains an illegal substance (i.e., marijuana, cocaine) then this action will be grounds for dismissal OR not prescriptions for narcotics will be given?
• Patient and provider signatures
• Date
• Copy placed in patient’s electronic record

Non-Medical Use
• An estimated 5.2 million persons are current non-medical users of prescription pain relievers.
• 56.5% state that their primary source included a friend or relative, or a prescription from more than one doctor source.
• Only 4.1% obtained the drug from a dealer or over the internet.
• (SAMHSA: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration).

Opiates
• Opiate are substances that are derived from the opium plant. More than 20 distinct alkaloids can be obtained. The three main phenanthrenes are morphine, codeine, and thebaine.
• Opioids are drugs that have morphine-like properties (narcotics).