Educating Medical Practitioners About Safe Opioid Prescribing:
Training from the Governor’s Institute on Substance Abuse

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There has been a great deal of speculation about what is causing the current epidemic of prescription medication abuse, with possible factors including sociocultural, economic, and medical issues [1]. One concern relates to the prescribing patterns of some clinicians—both primary care providers and specialists—particularly with regard to prescription of opioid analgesics. To address this concern, a number of national and state-level initiatives have aimed to promote safer opioid prescribing practices. In North Carolina, the Governor’s Institute on Substance Abuse has played a lead role in these efforts, with the support of the North Carolina Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Substance Abuse Services (DMHDD-SAS); the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA); and other funders.

As far back as 1994, the Governor’s Institute, along with Duke University and the Journal of Law, Medicine and Ethics, cosponsored a conference devoted to prescription drug abuse and published 2 articles on the need for medical education to address this issue [1, 2]. In 2008, the Governor’s Institute collaborated with SAMHSA to provide a series of workshops on safe opioid prescribing as part of a national training initiative. These workshops resulted in increased use of opioid risk screening tools and increased use of the North Carolina Controlled Substances Reporting System, and the success of these workshops demonstrated that prescribers were eager for training in this area. The Governor’s Institute then began receiving requests for similar training, which resulted in additional trainings over the next 4 years.

In collaboration with the North Carolina Society of Addiction Medicine and other specialty groups, the Governor’s Institute has provided or facilitated a number of initiatives targeted at a broad range of North Carolina’s medical practitioners. These trainings have focused on teaching core skills that will help practitioners balance the need for adequate pain management—including access to opioid medications, when needed—versus the need to minimize the risk of abuse. Topics that have been covered in these trainings include: the role and limitations of opioids in managing chronic pain; risk stratification as an element of treatment planning before initiation of a therapeutic trial; elements of adequate monitoring; and appropriate responses to aberrant medication behaviors, including when to discontinue opioids and when to refer patients for specialty care.

In 2009, with funding from the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust, the Governor’s Institute implemented a program for 10 counties in Eastern North Carolina. This initiative developed grassroots awareness of prescription drug abuse and included community awareness campaigns, medication turn-in days, and evening seminars for clinicians. Outreach within the medical community resulted in widespread attendance by primary care physicians, emergency medicine specialists, and pain management clinicians. Over the course of 2 years, 7 trainings were attended by a total of 260 health care providers. This training initiative also included the provision of onsite technical assistance in addressing systems barriers, which include organizational culture, workflow, and reimbursement issues.

The Governor’s Institute has also hosted a series of highly successful, practice-oriented conferences every year for the past 4 years. These conferences are formatted to attract both addiction medicine specialists and primary care clinicians. Each conference has focused attention on
滥用受控药物，特别是阿片类药物和苯二氮卓类药物。讲座提供了对文献的综述和治疗标准的审查，而研讨会则专注于深度讨论，并在实施治疗标准的现实世界实践环境中进行。

作为响应当前阿片类药物流行病的重要部分，治疗需求需要为那些已经从阿片类药物滥用过渡到阿片类药物成瘾的个人提供。然而，临床医生在处理这个问题上经常得不到支持。为解决这一需求，州长学院与DMHDDSAS合作，在过去的4年里建立了一个持续的指导网络，为那些在阿片类药物治疗项目（如美沙酮诊所）工作的人。这个指导包括每月的电话会议，包括案例讨论、文献综述和正在发展中治疗标准。对于提供在办公室治疗的布普洛龙或纳洛酮（阿片类药物成瘾的激动剂和拮抗剂疗法），州长学院资助了在每年的成瘾医学会议上进行的培训更新。这些研讨会吸引了北卡罗来纳州大多数治疗阿片类药物成瘾的布普洛龙或纳洛酮的医生。

北卡罗来纳州社区健康办公室（CCNC）的领导者长期意识到处方药滥用的公共卫生影响。在威克斯县令人印象深刻的Project Lazarus成功的基础上[3]，CCNC最近发起并实施了州级Project Lazarus：慢性疼痛倡议。作为该倡议的一部分，州长学院一直在寻求开发和实施培训课程。这个为期2年的项目，由Kate B. Reynolds慈善信托和北卡罗来纳州农村卫生和社区保健办公室资助，将提供40次培训课程，为大约2,500 – 3,000名临床医生提供培训，提供实用的和即时的资源。项目还将包括持续的地区性个案讨论会议，涵盖慢性疼痛的多维特征；阿片类药物在安全有效管理慢性疼痛中的作用；对滥用或滥用行为的筛查和风险分层，以降低滥用或滥用行为；如果发生滥用或滥用行为时进行干预；以及与当地疼痛管理和行为健康专家的合作。

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