Opioid risk assessment is one component of a comprehensive pain evaluation for chronic non-cancer pain. Risk assessment should be completed prior to the start of opioid treatment and ongoing during treatment. Risk assessment tools do not diagnose substance use disorders; they are screening tools to identify high-risk patients that require close monitoring, further assessment, and possible referral to a Behavioral Health or Addiction Medicine specialist.

Components of an opioid risk assessment:

- Identify potential aberrant or red flag behaviors related to controlled substance use.
- Screen for substance use disorder with the CAGE-AID tool; one or more positive responses require a more comprehensive assessment.
- Use a validated opioid risk screening tool such as the Opioid Risk Tool (ORT); Diagnosis, Intractability, Risk, Efficacy (DIRE) tool; or the Screener and Opioid Assessment for Patients with Pain-Revised (SOAPP-R).
  - ORT, DIRE and SOAPP-R are used prior to the start of opioid treatment
  - Choice of tool depends on depth of assessment desired, format availability (paper, electronic, clinician interview), and preference for patient versus clinician administration.
  - Current Opioid Misuse Measure (COMM) is used to monitor risk during treatment
- Review of the prescription drug monitoring program (PDMP) database. Areas of concern include multiple prescribers, early refills, frequent prescriptions from Emergency Department providers, and use of multiple controlled substances particularly the combination of opioids and benzodiazepines. (Enhanced PDMP coming January 17, 2016)
- Complete a baseline urine drug screen
- Check Circuit Court Access for crimes related to controlled substances

Stay tuned: Next week, information on risk stratification and management considerations based on risk will be presented.

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