

# NCMB's Safe Opioid Prescribing Initiative: What the data show so far

In April, NCMB launched a first-of-its-kind initiative to increase its oversight of opioid prescribing known as the Safe Opioid Prescribing Initiative (SOPI). This program uses data provided by the NC Department of Health and Human Services\* to identify prescribers for investigation by the Board. Its primary goal is to reduce patient harm and deaths related to prescription opioids by proactively identifying and addressing potentially unsafe prescribing.

NCMB recognizes that chronic pain is a legitimate medical issue and wants patients to receive safe and appropriate care. The Board encourages care that conforms to current accepted standards regardless of the quantity or dose of medication prescribed.

Understandably, SOPI has caused some anxiety among NCMB licensees who have no wish to find themselves the subject of a medical board investigation. The Board recognizes that prescribers identified through its selection criteria may be practicing and prescribing in accordance with accepted standards of care.

This infographic presents preliminary data about the Board work on SOPI through September 2017.

\*Data is provided by the state Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse Services, Drug Control Unit, and the NC Office of Chief Medical Examiner

## Cases opened



NCMB has opened **90** cases based on SOPI criteria affecting **0.2%** of active licensees.

Put another way, **99.8%** of licensees have not been directly affected.



Percent of cases opened based on prescribing criteria



Percent of cases opened based on 2+ patient deaths due to opioid poisoning



## Areas of practice investigated

38%

Pain management or physical medicine & rehabilitation

27%

Family medicine or internal medicine

14%

Other (i.e. neurology, surgery, etc.)

11%

Psychiatry

10%

Emergency medicine

0%

Hospice or palliative medicine

## Board actions

Breakdown of actions in SOPI cases reviewed by the Board.



\*Reflects Board vote to take public action or issue charges against licensee

## Who does SOPI investigate?

SOPI looks at prescribers who fall in one or both of the following categories:



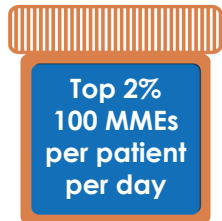
Licensees managing large numbers of patients at high daily doses of opioids

Licensees who have had two or more patients die of opioid poisoning within 12 months



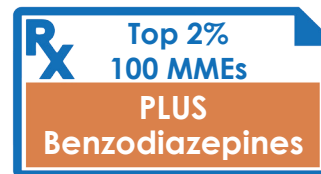
## SOPI investigative criteria (effective July 1, 2017)

### HIGH DOSE, HIGH VOLUME



Top two percent of those prescribing 100 milligrams of morphine equivalents (MME) per patient per day

### HIGH DOSE, HIGH VOLUME



Top two percent of those prescribing 100 MMEs per patient per day in combination with any benzodiazepine

### TWO OR MORE PATIENT DEATHS



\*30+ tablets

Prescribers with two+ patient deaths in the preceding 12 months due to opioid poisoning who prescribed \*opioids within 60 days of death



### Important Reminder

NCMB's selection criteria for investigation should not be treated as standard of care and do not impose or suggest a limit on opioid prescribing. By law, the Board cannot take action against a licensee solely because he or she prescribes above the level stated in the selection criteria. Meeting criteria for investigation is not evidence of wrong doing.



### Learn More

Find more information about the Safe Opioid Prescribing Initiative, including FAQs, prescriber resources, and CME opportunities on our website at:

[www.ncmedboard.org/safeopioids](http://www.ncmedboard.org/safeopioids)