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New rules require physicians to complete training on chronic pain, end-of-life care

DES MOINES, IA – Iowa physicians are required to complete continuing medical education (CME) on chronic pain management and end-of-life care under new administrative rules that became effective August 17.

The rules in Iowa Administrative Code 653 Chapter 11 were developed by the Iowa Board of Medicine to protect the public's health by requiring a greater awareness and understanding among physicians about chronic pain management and palliative care, said Siroos Shirazi, M.D., Board chair.

“The Board believes more physician education will help stem the growing problem of addiction, abuse and diversion of pain medications by patients,” he said. “Correspondingly, pain management is an integral part of end-of-life care.”

Physicians seeking renewal of their license must complete two hours of accredited training on chronic pain management and two hours of accredited training on end-of-life care every five years. The rules apply to physicians who regularly provide primary health care to patients, including emergency room physicians, family physicians, general practice physicians, internists, neurologists, pain medicine specialists and psychiatrists.

To support the chronic pain management education requirement, the Board is offering a book, “Responsible Opioid Prescribing: A Physician’s Guide,” which has an online course that is accredited training. The book by Scott Fishman, M.D., a nationally recognized pain specialist, identifies pragmatic steps for reducing a patient’s risk of addiction, abuse and diversion of pain medications. Physicians can order a free book by calling (515) 242-6039 or sending an e-mail to ibm@iowa.gov

The required pain management and end-of-life training can be applied toward a physician’s mandatory completion of 40 hours of accredited CMEs every two years for license renewal.

Iowa physicians are also required to complete two hours of training in child abuse identification

and reporting and two hours of training in dependent adult abuse identification every five years. These mandatory trainings can also be applied to the CME requirement of 40 hours every two years.

The new CME requirements complement new rules encouraging physicians to use additional monitoring tools when prescribing pain medications.

The new rules in Iowa Administrative Code 653 Chapter 13 recommend physicians consider establishing pain management agreements, use drug screens and review a patient's controlled substance prescription history in the Iowa Prescription Monitoring Program database if the physician believes the patient is at risk of abuse or diversion of the medication. A sample pain management agreement is available on the Board's website, www.medicalboard.iowa.gov

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