

Physical therapy is best choice for pain management

August 29 2016, by Laura Dawahare

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), sales of prescription opioids have quadrupled in the United States since 1999, even though there has not been an overall change in the amount of pain reported.

People with chronic [pain](#) conditions unrelated to cancer often depend on prescription opioids to manage their pain. As the volume of opioid usage has increased, so has the misuse, abuse and overdose of these drugs in Kentucky and across the United States.

The statistics are sobering:

- As many as one in four people who receive prescription opioids long term for non-cancer pain in primary care settings suffers with addiction.
- Heroin-related overdose deaths more than quadrupled between 2002 and 2014, and people addicted to prescription opioids are 40 times more likely to be addicted to heroin.
- More than 165,000 people in the United States have died from opioid pain-medication-related overdoses since 1999.
- Every day, more than 1,000 people are treated in emergency departments for misusing [prescription opioids](#).

The CDC released guidelines in March 2016 urging prescribers to reduce the use of opioids in favor of safer alternatives in the treatment of chronic pain. Physical therapy is one of the recommended non-opioid

alternatives.

If you or someone you know has pain not related to cancer, consider physical therapy as a safer alternative for managing your pain. Physical therapists diagnose and treat movement disorders that may be contributing to your pain and will develop an active treatment plan specific to your goals.

A 2008 study following 20,000 people over a period of 11 years found that people who exercised regularly reported less pain. Manual therapy can reduce pain and improve mobility so that people have more pain-free movement. That, in turn, promotes more activity, which reduces pain even further. Exercise and manual therapy are two components of an active treatment plan that may be used by a physical therapist to help manage pain.

The American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) has launched a national campaign called #ChoosePT to raise awareness about the risks of opioids and the choice of [physical therapy](#) as a safe alternative for long-term pain management.

More information: To find out more or to locate a physical therapist in Kentucky, check out the consumer information link on the APTA website at: www.MoveForwardPT.com

Provided by University of Kentucky

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