

# Researchers influence CDC's clarification on prescribing opioids for cancer pain

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Penn Nursing's Salimah H. Meghani, PhD, MBE, RN, FAAN, Associate Professor of Nursing & Term Chair of Palliative Care; Associate Director of the NewCourtland Center for Transitions and Health; and a Senior Fellow at the Leonard Davis Institute of Health Economics. Credit: Penn Nursing

To reduce the number of people who may misuse, abuse, or overdose

from opioids, multiple national agencies including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have published guidelines to improve the way opioids are prescribed. Yet some of these guidelines have caused confusion and misapplication among clinicians and unintendedly limited treatment of pain for people with cancer.

A *JAMA Oncology* article by two Penn researchers calling for consistency in clinical practice guidelines for pain control in individuals with cancer-related pain has helped to bridge the divide in pain management guidelines. As a result, [The CDC has issued](#) key clarification on its Guideline for Prescribing Opioids for Chronic Pain in order to ensure safe and appropriate access for [cancer patients](#), cancer survivors, and individuals with sickle cell disease. The CDC clarification is especially important because many insurance payors have been inappropriately using it to make opioid coverage determinations for those exact populations.

"Many of the current recommendations around opioid prescribing practices stem from expert consensus rather than [empirical research](#), which is urgently needed to generate and develop informed guidelines for patients with chronic cancer-related pain," said the article's lead author Penn Nursing's Salimah H. Meghani, Ph.D., MBE, RN, FAAN, Associate Professor of Nursing & Term Chair of Palliative Care; Associate Director of the NewCourtland Center for Transitions and Health; and a Senior Fellow at the Leonard Davis Institute of Health Economics.

**More information:** Salimah H. Meghani et al. Bridging the Critical Divide in Pain Management Guidelines From the CDC, NCCN, and ASCO for Cancer Survivors, *JAMA Oncology* (2018). [DOI: 10.1001/jamaoncol.2018.1574](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamaoncol.2018.1574)

Provided by University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing

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