

## MEDICAL BOARD STAFF REPORT

DATE REPORT ISSUED: January 22, 2021  
 ATTENTION: Members, Medical Board of California  
 SUBJECT: Revising Guidelines for Prescribing Controlled  
 Substances for Pain  
 STAFF CONTACT: Bill Prasifka, Executive Director

### REQUESTED ACTION:

This report is intended to provide the Members with an update on the status of the current Guidelines for Prescribing Controlled Substances for Pain (Guidelines) and set forth a rationale for revising the Guidelines and establishing a taskforce to implement the same.

### CURRENT GUIDELINES:

The current Guidelines were published by the Board in November 2014. Since that time, the Board has maintained a high level of activity in this space. The Board has received 2662 complaints in this area since 2015, resulting in 324 disciplinary sanctions. In August 2015, the Board instituted the Prescription Review Program (PRP) (formerly the Death Certificate Project). In this initiative the Board has examined 2694 death certificates for the years 2012-13. The PRP was recently recommenced and the Board will be examining 2666 death certificates for the year 2019.

Much has occurred in this area nationwide and in California since the adoption of the current Guidelines.

- CDC updated and published new Guidelines for Prescribing Opioids for Chronic Pain – 2016
- Department of Health and Human Services-USA published final report on Pain Management Best Practices Inter-Agency Task Force Report – Updates, Gaps, Inconsistencies, and Recommendations – May 2019
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) updated and published several articles on Appropriate Use of Opioids in the Treatment of Pain and Opioid-Related Addiction, guidelines governing Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT), etc.
- Federation of State Medical Boards (FSMB) resources – 2019 Report on Acute Opioid Prescribing Guidelines, 2017 Guidelines for the Chronic Use of Opioid Analgesics, etc.
- Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) – updated their guidelines on Reducing Opioid Misuse, Opioid Prescribing, Prescribing Opioids: Resources for Providers, etc. since 2014.
- In California, several sections of the Business and Professions Code relating to prescribing controlled substances have been amended since 2014.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the Board to undertake a review of the Guidelines and begin consulting with relevant stakeholders and subject matter experts. This work is best undertaken by a task force appointed by the President which will have executive staff support.