

## **Portage Medical FHT Chronic Pain Program**

Our program provides patients experiencing ongoing, non-cancer pain, with tools to help optimize everyday living in a safe and healthy way. It will identify opportunities to better manage narcotic consumption so that long-term side effects are minimized. Referrals to other family health team (FHT) resources will be offered as well as detailed, regular pain assessments.

With opioid therapy for chronic pain management, there is a risk of addiction, poisoning, abuse and even death. Opioid poisoning occurs when: the wrong dose is taken; prescribed drugs are taken in combination with self-prescribed drugs or alcohol; opioid is not taken as recommended (prescribed or illegally obtained).

Between July 2017 and June 2018, Niagara reported 83 opioid related deaths ranking this region with the highest mortality rate at 18.1 per 100,000 people (Opioid Mortality Surveillance Report). As well, Niagara Falls has the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest rate of emergency department visits due to opioid poisoning compared to similar sized communities in Ontario and Alberta (Opioid Related Harms in Canada, December 2018.)

Knowing there is a risk for the above, your health providers want to ensure that we are taking every precaution to reduce harm and maximize your pain control by closely following the 2017 Canadian guidelines for prescribing opioids as a way to ensure you, and those close to you, are safe.

### **What to expect at your first appointment?**

- A full assessment with a Registered Nurse from the chronic pain program.
- The appointment normally lasts approximately 60 minutes and focuses on the origin and progression of your pain.
- Assessments include: effects of pain on daily activities, work, sleep, mood and emotional well-being.
- SMART goal setting with plans to help achieve them which could be: return to work; sleep in bed; walk down the street or whatever you are hoping to achieve.
- Naloxone training if required.
- A three-way meeting with yourself, your family doctor and the pain nurse.

### **What to bring to your first appointment?**

- Bring all the medication in the pill bottles you are currently taking.
- Bring any reports or letters related to your current pain situation.

### **Treatment Options**

There are a variety of treatment options or plans that can be discussed at the appointment. These include but are not limited to:

- *Pharmacological Interventions*
  - Nerve blocks
  - Epidurals
  - Non-opioid medications
  - Opioid medications

- *Non-pharmacological Interventions*
  - Physiotherapy participation
  - Psychological therapy
  - Transcutaneous Electric Nerve Stimulation (TENS)
  
- *Self-management techniques and workshops*
  - Take Control, Take Charge: A six-week program for patients with chronic disease/pain aimed at helping you live a healthier lifestyle by developing skills to help manage stress, emotions and ultimately improve your quality of life.
  - Better Choices, Better Health Workshop: Free online workshops providing peer support, tools to manage symptoms and make daily tasks easier.

**What happens after your first appointment?**

Based on your goals and the agreed upon care plan, you may be referred to other assessment teams, referred for diagnostic investigations, referred to a pain clinic or started on new medications. You will receive a telephone call from the pain nurse a month after the initial assessment and a follow-up office appointment will be scheduled three months after your first visit.

Part of ensuring that you are taking medication properly and not taking other substances which may interfere with prescribed medication, the program will carry out random urine drug screens.

To prepare for your first appointment, use this space to set at least one goal for yourself:

My Pain Goals:

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Our plan to achieve your goals:

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