Workers' Comp

A Prescription for Fighting Opioid Use Disorder

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Understanding and Planning

To best respond to the crisis, we need to be clear about what opioid use disorder (OUD) is and how we identify it. By spotting misuse sooner, prescribers have a greater ability to intervene and perhaps prevent another of the more than 183,000 fatal opioid overdoses that occurred from 1999 through 2015. Earlier intervention can also help to avoid the many other poor outcomes that can result from misusing opioids. The number of fatalities, as alarming as it is, veils the full scope of the problem. For every fatal overdose there are 11 treatment admissions for abuse, 28 emergency department visits for misuse or abuse, 133 people who misuse opioids or are dependent upon them, and 689 nonmedical users, according to statistics adapted from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), which is the primary federal agency responsible for substance abuse and mental health services.

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