



WHITE PAPER

The Opioid Epidemic

An Integrated Approach to Orthopedic
Pain Management and Addiction

The Opioid Epidemic

White paper topics:

- Why integrated care and data interoperability are fundamental to opioid addiction treatment
- How an EHR that covers both medical and rehab therapy is necessary to treat opioid addiction
- Strategies to consider as healthcare services integrate care

Opioid overdoses accounted for more than 47,000 deaths in 2018—more than any previous year on record. And an estimated 40 percent of those opioid overdose deaths involved a prescription.¹

The link between opioids and orthopedic surgery

In 2017, patients received nearly 100 to 200 opioid pills to help manage pain from **four common orthopedic procedures**:

- ① Rotator cuff repair
- ② Hip replacement
- ③ Knee replacement
- ④ Spine surgery

Nearly 9% of surgical patients in 2017 became newly persistent opioid users who continued to take opioids three to six months following surgery; that number climbed as high as 17% for patients undergoing certain surgeries.²

In 2017, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) declared a public health emergency relating to opioid addiction and overdoses. To combat the crisis, they announced a five-point strategy:

- ① Better addiction, prevention, treatment, and recovery services
- ② Better data
- ③ Better pain management
- ④ Better targeting of overdose reversing drugs
- ⑤ Better research



The opioid epidemic is a major challenge facing healthcare management today. A lack of funding and an increased case load for healthcare facilities has only amplified this challenge. Further complicating matters is a lack of interoperability between healthcare technology systems, such as electronic health records (EHR). When it comes to sharing data, healthcare is far behind other industries, such as financial services—banks have long been able to exchange data and move money around—and is struggling to catch up.

Recent regulation shined a light on the need for an integrative response to the crisis.

The Substance Use-Disorder Prevention that Promotes Opioid Recovery and Treatment (SUPPORT) for Patients and Communities Act:

- Requires e-prescribing of controlled substances under Medicare starting in 2021.
- Requires HHS to establish a standard, secure electronic prior authorization system for Medicare no later than January 1, 2021.
- Requires Medicaid providers to check a prescription drug monitoring program (PDMP) before prescribing a controlled substance starting October 2021.
- Requires HHS to improve the efficiency and use of PDMPs by addressing intrastate interoperability and EHR integration issues.

Why integrated care and data interoperability are fundamental to opioid addiction treatment

Without access to comprehensive data about an individual, it becomes difficult to detect, mitigate, and treat current and future opioid abuse situations. Successfully treating opioid addiction requires the integration of medical, rehab therapy, and post-operative care. And doing so within an EHR system ensures cohesive treatment plans for the many issues patients with substance use disorders face. Medical care alone cannot successfully treat such a patient.

Opioid users have to change their behavior to not only determine the root cause of their addiction, but to also stay clean. This is especially true for patients who have had to manage chronic pain.

Orthopedic surgeons are the third-highest opioid prescribers in the United States. Their prescribing practices can significantly affect the quantity of unconsumed opioids available to fuel the current opioid epidemic. Recent research demonstrates that an approach to pain management that minimizes narcotics exposure improves outcomes. An approach that provides pre- and post-op education, establishes a benchmark for pain prior to surgery, and includes rehab therapy can help tremendously.

There are challenges to EHR integration, however. According to the Electronic Health Records Association, EHR developers have to code 50 different types of systems connectivity to respond to state-to-state variation. This creates an obstacle to interoperability between states and public health research opportunities. And, without the ability to check state records for controlled substances prescribed by multiple providers for an individual patient, providers are limited in their ability to ensure safeguards to prevent abuse.

But if medical and rehab therapy professionals work in conjunction, via an integrated EHR, providers can:

- Determine the need for opioids
- Determine the risk for opioid misuse
- Identify and incorporate necessary safeguards
- Determine the efficacy of pain management
- Determine effective means of withdrawal

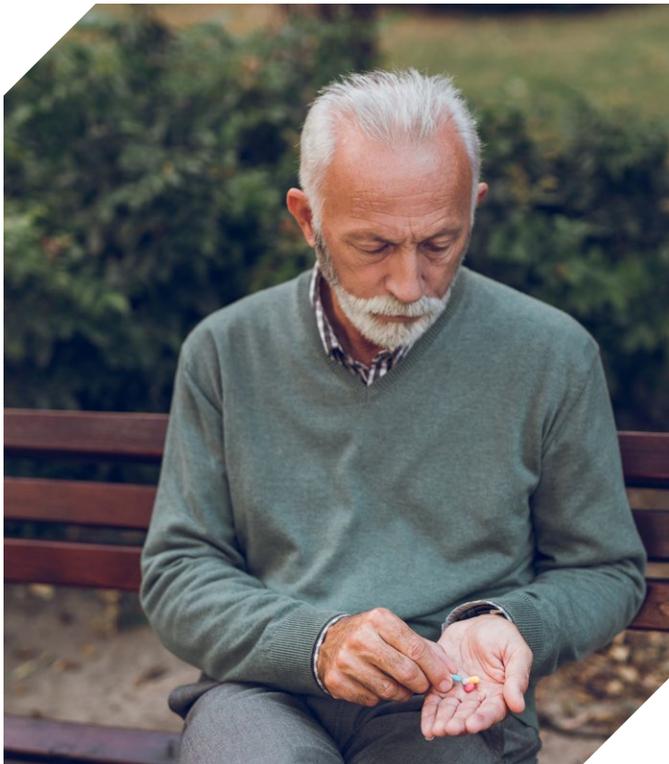


Essentially, healthcare management professionals are able to support better outcomes with a holistic approach pre- and post-op, that uses integrated technology to see a full patient view.

Treating these episodes of care separately will not help rehabilitate a patient, as all facets of care are interrelated.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines recommend that, when treating acute pain, physicians should prescribe opioids at the lowest effective dose and for no longer than the expected duration of pain. In addition, states are passing legislation that requires opioid prescriptions be written for no more than a seven-day supply, which some experts believe is the appropriate length of time for an opioid prescription.³

In addition, an effective EHR program should have the ability to adapt as healthcare and data management regulations change.



Strategies to consider as healthcare services integrate care

An integrated model of EHR is the direction healthcare is headed. Whether healthcare professionals are ready to embrace this model or not, they will need to.

NextGen Healthcare's integrated EHR software offers several features that aid in the fight against opioid addiction, such as:

NextGen® Orthopedic Suite

Document patient care from intake through charge creation. Gain efficiency in the documentation of orthopedic specific HPIs, Physical Exams, Assessment and Plan. Manage Surgery Scheduling process with workflow designed for the orthopedic practice. Complete an entire clinical viewing and reporting workflow in your EHR with image-enabled orthopedic integrated PACS.

NextGen® Therapy Suite

Access and share patient information seamlessly. Enhance the ability of therapists and other clinicians to exchange vital data and effectively work together within and across organizational boundaries. Interoperability with your referral base—conveniently exchange documentation with referral providers.

E-prescribing for Controlled Substances (EPCS)

Prescribers can facilitate controlled medication prescribing from the EHR. Prescribers are able to route new prescriptions and manage renewals to and from pharmacies that are currently participating.

Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP)

As a managed service, NextGen Healthcare's software enables a single point of connectivity between state PDMPs, EHR vendors, and health systems—with comprehensive industry analytics to enable opioid stewardship strategies, identify patients at risk for adverse events, and facilitate early intervention and improved clinical outcomes.

Virtual Visits

Virtual visits connect you with your patients to deliver high-quality care anytime, anywhere, on any device:

- Provide virtual follow-up visits
- Manage and refill medications
- Review lab results, x-rays, and ultrasounds
- Transition the patient to a virtual experience when necessary
- Provide a safe and effective care alternative to qualified patients
- Offer physicians an integrated experience that doesn't require them to change their documentation workflow
- Increase access to specialties such as behavioral health
- Tailor access based on operations and patient needs
- Reduce missed appointments

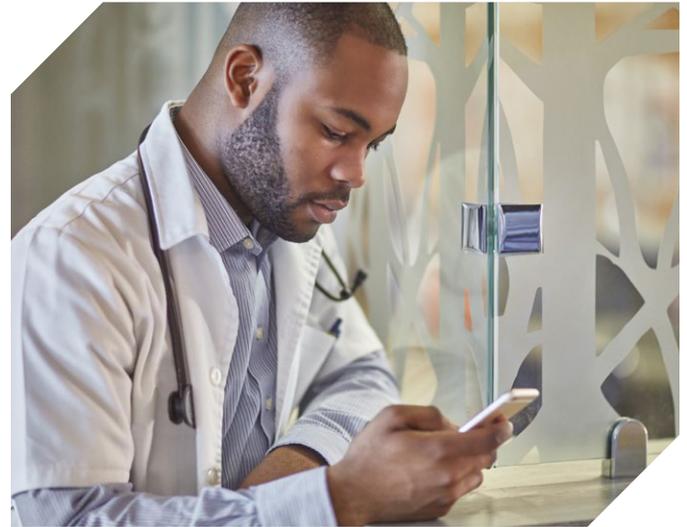
NextGen® Mobile

NextGen Mobile solutions complement existing clinical workflows through their easy and intuitive cloud-based platform. By streamlining clinical documentation and collaboration, NextGen Mobile is an integrated extension of your EHR that enables greater flexibility, saves time, and eases the burden of documentation.

An integrated EHR can help ease provider confusion by establishing a common minimum data set based on clinical relevance.

An integrated EHR also helps establish a consistent reporting timeline that will equip providers with real-time information at the point of prescription.

NextGen Healthcare's solution is a fully integrated, scalable EHR system that helps healthcare management professionals achieve interoperability, patient engagement, regulatory compliance, and value-based care delivery in the fight against opioid addiction.



TAKE THE NEXT STEP.

Contact us at **855-510-6398** or **results@nextgen.com**

¹ What is the U.S. Opioid Epidemic? U.S. Department of Health and Human Services website. Last reviewed Sep 4, 2019. <https://www.hhs.gov/opioids/about-the-epidemic/index.html>.

² Exposing a Silent Gateway to Persistent Opioid Use: A Choices Matter Status Report. Pacira BioSciences, Inc. website. Accessed Dec 6, 2019. https://www.planagainstpain.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Pacira_2018report_102419b_FINAL.pdf.

³ Orthopedic surgeons seek alternatives to opioid prescribing. Healio, Orthopedicstoday. Accessed Dec 16, 2019. <https://www.healio.com/orthopedics/business-of-orthopedics/news/print/orthopedics-today/%7B889f6fa8a-2006-4a9f-b441-83ec12725c27%D/orthopedic-surgeons-seek-alternatives-to-opioid-prescribing>