Cedars-Sinai Commitment Statement on Countering the Opioid Epidemic

Cedars-Sinai is one of the largest private, nonprofit medical centers in the western United States. Since its founding more than a century ago, it has evolved to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse region, setting standards in quality and innovative patient care, research, teaching and community service. Today, Cedars-Sinai is known for its national leadership in transforming the delivery of healthcare, expanding the horizons of medical knowledge through biomedical research, educating and training tomorrow’s healthcare professionals, and striving to improve the health status of the most vulnerable residents in our community.

As a health system built upon excellence in quality and safety, Cedars-Sinai is committed to addressing the opioid epidemic. Our physicians, nurses and other healthcare professionals understand that we are distinctly positioned to counter a crisis that is literally unfolding in our backyard. We are determined to use our training, expertise and compassion to advance solutions at the local, regional and national levels.

Prevention, Treatment and Recovery Services
We are continually working to expand services for patients who suffer from pain disorders and are physically dependent on or addicted to opioids. In addition to our long-standing comprehensive pain center and inpatient pain services, we have developed novel programs to address the focused needs of sub-populations across the continuum of care. Examples include a multidisciplinary opioid reduction program for patients with spine disease, an integrated pain program for patients in primary care, and an addiction consultation service for hospitalized patients with opioid-use disorders.

We have instituted across-the-board quality improvement programs to identify at-risk patients and to enhance monitoring of adverse events. We also have integrated new tools in our electronic health records to prompt physicians to more closely follow evidence-based practices when managing pain or prescribing opioid medications. One example involves the development of decision support tools that alert physicians of medication risks and provide guidance on safe and appropriate management strategies. These measures have enabled us to reduce complications for our patients while also effectively managing their pain.

Research, Data and Metrics
Researchers at Cedars-Sinai have a wide range of investigations under way aimed at understanding and addressing pain as well as preventing and intervening in opioid-related problems. Our physician scientists are studying how physicians and patients communicate, evaluating collaborative care models to improve practices for patients with opioid use disorders, developing novel interventions for pain treatment among patients with various types of pain, and evaluating technological innovations, including virtual reality and wearable devices.

In our clinical enterprise, we have instituted performance metrics to track improvements in clinical care. We are developing clinical dashboards that provide access to real-time data on medical conditions, medications and other factors that can affect respiration or cause over-sedation. We are using this
information to inform monitoring levels by nurses, to assess appropriate prescriptions, and to escalate cases to specialty consultations when needed.

**Pain Management Guidelines and Evidence Standards**
Leaders at Cedars-Sinai have contributed to the development of national guidelines on appropriate opioid prescribing. These guidelines, published by medical associations such as the Society for Hospital Medicine and the American Society of Addiction Medicine, now serve as a basis for designing internal protocols at Cedars-Sinai.

Our clinician experts also have developed protocols to promote multimodal pain management—using a variety of alternative medications at the beside for health conditions that once were managed with opioids. Patients now are able to undergo certain surgeries and have their symptoms appropriately managed without relying on opioid analgesics at all. At the same time, we adhere closely to existing evidence-based standards and evaluate and adopt novel strategies that allow us to address critical gaps in knowledge.

**Health Professional Education and Training**
A significant component of our approach involves the education of our healthcare workers on how to manage pain and prescribe opioids appropriately. We do this through our many medical training programs, through our continuing education events, and through special conferences organized around specific medical conditions and academic disciplines.

Cedars-Sinai supports the Treating Addiction in the Primary Care Safety Net (TAPC) program in partnership with the Center for Care Innovations and the California Health Care Foundation. The TAPC program provides technical assistance for community health centers in California on how to implement and sustain medication-related treatments for opioid addiction. The program provides in-person and virtual learning events, individualized team coaching and site visits to health centers.

We are proud of the work we are leading at Cedars-Sinai to stem the opioid crisis. We recognize that we have more work to do and that we must seize new opportunities to improve the management of pain, to prevent harms from opioid use, and to assess and treat patients who develop opioid addictions. We are committed to refining our own programs and to continuing our collaborations with other health systems that share our deep commitment to address this public health crisis.