Commitment Statement on Countering the U.S. Opioid Epidemic

3/4/2020

The American College of Medical Toxicology (ACMT) is a national nonprofit medical association and is the primary professional organization of medical toxicologists. ACMT’s mission is to *advance the toxicologic care of patients and populations, and advocate for the specialty of medical toxicology.*

Medical toxicologists are specially trained physicians who diagnose, treat, manage and prevent human poisonings such as overdoses from drugs of abuse (including opioids and novel psychoactive substances), childhood exposures to lead, and bites from venomous snakes. Specific to opioids, medical toxicology plays a critical role in treating and managing opioid use disorder, preventing deaths from overdose, as well as increasing awareness and understanding of this disorder.

Medical toxicologists are opioid experts in:

- Management of patients with intoxication and overdose from substances of abuse
- Antidote use including naloxone and other opioid reversal agents
- Addiction management with a focus on medication-assisted therapy
- Epidemiology and public health implications of emerging drugs of abuse including opioids (fentanyl derivatives)
- Adverse drug reactions and events
- Forensic toxicology, and
- Risk communication

ACMT members are located primarily in academic centers across the county; they provide consultation and bedside care to patients with a variety of opioid disorders including intoxication, overdose, and withdrawal. Ninety percent have completed residency in emergency medicine training; some have also completed residencies in pediatrics, internal medicine, preventive medicine and psychiatry. All have completed a 2-year fellowship in medical toxicology after residency.
Many are active in research, scholarship, and policy efforts, and provide extensive education about opioids throughout their hospitals and medical schools. In addition to their clinical work, many also provide medical direction and support to the nation’s poison control centers.

Commitment to educating and training health professionals

While ACMT has work underway in each of the 4 focus areas of the network; ACMT has significant experience and efforts underway to educate and train health professionals. In September 2019, ACMT was awarded a $500,000 2-year grant from SAMHSA’s expansion of practitioner education program. The purpose of this program is to expand the integration of substance use disorder (SUD) education into the standard curriculum of relevant healthcare and health services education programs. ACMT developed SUSTAIN ED (substance use screening and treatment approach in the ED) which includes high quality, comprehensive curriculum on the identification and treatment of SUDs (alcohol, marijuana, stimulants, and opioids). During year one, ACMT will pilot this curriculum at eleven emergency medicine residency programs. In year two, ACMT will add ten additional emergency medicine residencies to the program. ACMT has partnered with the American Board of Emergency Medicine (ABEM) to develop and implement exam questions related to SUD on licensing and certification exams.

In addition to SUSTAIN ED, ACMT has provided online education to thousands of students over the years. For example:

- Beginning in 2012, ACMT established a national classroom to offer on-demand educational modules to students, residents and other trainees on topics relating to medical toxicology and public health.
- ACMT hosts a series of monthly webinar attracting upwards of 150-200 participants from across the US on topics related to medical toxicology, emergency medicine, and addiction medicine.
- In 2017, ACMT started a monthly addiction medicine webinar series which features a round-table discussion by national experts who discuss routine and challenging addiction medicine cases including elements relating to screening, assessment and treatment of addiction.
- In 2018 ACMT, through its sister organization, the Medical Toxicology Foundation, was awarded a grant to specifically train 100 emergency medicine residents and faculty about the initiation of buprenorphine in the management of the SUD patient in the ED in the Philadelphia area.