

Educating Together, Improving Together

Harmonizing Interprofessional Approaches
to Address the Opioid Epidemic

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Using Data to Identify Actionable Priorities

The United States is in the midst of an urgent and complex opioid crisis. A coordinated response requires identifying and addressing professional practice gaps (PPGs) related to pain management, opioid use disorder (OUD), and other substance use disorder (SUD) care, as well as integrating evidence-based best practices into health professional education and training curricula across the continuum from undergraduate training into post-graduate continuing education. This Special Publication presents two information-gathering efforts to assess persisting PPGs pertaining to pain management and SUD care and to better understand the current health professional education environment: the first is a comprehensive literature review, and the second is a survey of the regulatory landscape.

The results underscore the need to collaboratively develop a harmonized interprofessional, person- and family-centered approach for the continuum of health professions education to more effectively address the opioid crisis. Optimizing practice, regulation, and education has continued to be a challenge for educational systems and stakeholders looking to prepare and support students, trainees, and professions for the complexities of the field.

This Special Publication describes key action-oriented priorities to support the goal identified above which aims to navigate substantial complexity by identifying unwarranted (or unproductive) variation,

Priority 1: Advance Minimum Core Competencies

- Establish minimum core competencies in pain management and SUDs for all health care

Priority 3: Foster Interprofessional Collaboration

- Foster interprofessional collaboration among licensing and certifying bodies to optimize regulatory approaches and outcomes.
- Recognize that interprofessional care is essential to manage both pain management and SUDs.
- Reframe regulatory accountability for individual professions and interprofessional teams.
- Establish a national task force to study existing variations in state-level regulations and seek opportunities to harmonize policies.
- Advance interprofessional practice by supporting programmatic activities through assessment, curricula, and quality measures.



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