

You, the Dea, and
The Georgia Composite State Board of Medical Examiners
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Georgia has strict laws regarding the prescribing of addictive substances. With a few helpful hints, you can stay out of trouble yet treat your patients appropriately. Consider the following sent to all physicians licensed in Georgia:

“The Georgia Board of Medical Examiners is charged by law to protect the citizens of the State from harmful physician management. A significant number of physicians who are asked to appear before the Board are required to do so because of their lack of information about the management and responsibilities in prescribing controlled substances. Frequently, the inadvertent offender is a physician with a warm heart and a desire to relieve pain and misery...”

The Board lists steps to assure proper use of addictive substances.

Several of those steps are:

- A. Don't prescribe anything unless your diagnosis is supported by your history and physical.
- B. Create a plan using nonaddictive drugs first, if possible.
- C. Document that nonaddictive substances did not work or are not appropriate before giving addictive drugs.
- D. Make sure that you are not dealing with a drug-seeking patient.
(A list is kept by many EDs of patients who commonly present to the E.D. with drug seeking behavior)
- E. Maintain adequate records to support your use/continued use of addictive substances.

In most EDs narcotics are under-utilized rather than over-utilized because of fear of drug-seekers and because physicians worry about causing iatrogenic addiction in patients along with the other concerns listed above. There are many patients we see that have legitimate pain and are appropriately managed with narcotics. Always remember that we, as healers, have been charged to "relieve suffering and protect life". Short courses of narcotic analgesics are appropriate and seldom (never) cause addiction when prescribed for an acutely painful condition over a period of several days to 1-2 weeks.