



Health Alert

Dealing With Opioid Painkiller Dependence

(NAPSA)—Although, according to a recent report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, deaths from prescription painkillers have reached epidemic levels in the past decade, with more than 40 people in the U.S. dying each day, you can protect the people you care about. That's vital, considering the report also revealed that nearly 12 million Americans misuse prescription painkillers yearly.

It's Not Just a Behavioral Problem

For one thing, you should know that the American Society of Addiction Medicine has defined addiction as a chronic brain disease—it is not simply a behavioral problem.

“Addiction to opioid painkiller medication is not a failure of personal will,” explained Mark Kraus, M.D., addiction medicine specialist and diplomat of the American Board of Addiction Medicine. “People dependent on opioid painkillers need to know there are effective medical treatment options available in the privacy of a physician’s office to help them overcome their addiction.”

Doctors Have a Solution

Opioid dependence does not discriminate and affects people of all ages and backgrounds. For many, like Lauren N., a young suburban mother, facing painkiller addiction was not what she or her family ever expected. After being prescribed opioid painkillers following surgeries and treatment for migraines, Lauren found herself unable to start the day without taking her dose of painkiller medication. Luckily, she discovered the option of being treated in a physi-



Opioid painkiller addiction is considered a progressive and chronic disease, making medical management an important part of treatment.

cian’s office, which meant she could privately address her addiction.

People who suffer from opioid dependence often face stigma and barriers that can make starting treatment seem like a daunting task. Many are reluctant to seek help because they think rehab facilities and methadone programs are the only options. The Drug Addiction Treatment Act is intended to help by expanding access to include treatments based in doctors’ offices. A doctor who is certified to treat opioid dependence can now prescribe medications that have been approved to help maintain patients in treatment and reduce opioid use by managing withdrawal symptoms and reducing cravings.

Where to Get Help

Today, people have more options than ever, including a visit to www.TurnToHelp.com, a website that offers a simple screening tool to help individuals recognize addiction and a physician finder to help identify doctors who are specially trained in treating people with addiction to painkillers.