



# THE IMPORTANCE OF MEDICATION MONITORING

## THE MEDICATION EPIDEMIC



# WHY MONITOR?

- › The CDC Recommends the use of urine drug testing to identify prescribed substances and undisclosed use.
- › To obtain information you may otherwise not have. Healthcare providers test A1C levels and cholesterol, why not test for medication levels? Levels that could potentially harm patients, endanger communities and risk providers licensure.
- › To give healthcare providers the information they need to be able to give their patients the best possible standard of care available.
- › Monitoring is important because patients sometimes think if a medication was prescribed by their provider then it is safe...period. Opioids, Benzodiazepines, Stimulants, and antipsychotics as well as many other medications when taken with alcohol, illicit drugs or even other medications can prove to be fatal.
- › Medication monitoring is a tool that can not only be used to find patients who are not compliant but also as a preventative tool to make sure patients do not experience any drug to drug interactions!





## 3 AREAS OF IMPORTANCE FOR MONITORING

- › 1. OPIOID THERAPY COSTS – In June, 2017 the US Government issued a report conducted by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality that showed an increase in hospitalizations involving opioids over the last decade. From 2005-2014 (most recent data) opioid related inpatient stays had increased 64%. The rate of opioid related ER visits has doubled.
- › It states that people from all age groups, Ethnic groups, and all sexes fall prey to opioid misuse, abuse and diversion.

### TWO KEY POINTS:

1. Medication monitoring can help prevent some hospital stays. The data and analysis Ameritox provides can help clinicians better identify misuse, abuse and possible diversion of opioids and other RX medications which could prevent hospitalization for opioid related issues.
2. Medication monitoring can help lower overall costs associated with hospitalization. According to the CDC, people who abuse opioids generate more than 8 times the annual health care costs compared to people who do not. The CDC says the average cost of hospital admittance per patient for a RX painkiller overdose is \$29,497. Even for those treated and released from the ER, the average cost is \$3,640.

The US Surgeon General included that “for many individuals regular monitoring, alongside the adverse consequences of a failed urine test, provide powerful motivation to abstain” from further drug misuse, abuse potentially lowering costs for acute care.



# ADHD AND OTHER STIMULANTS

- › Second area of concern is with ADHD medications.
- › Below are some statistics from MEDPAGE TODAY from the 1.19.2016 issue:
- › About a third of some 4,000 patients who gave urine samples turned up negative for their prescribed stimulant.
- › In samples where the prescribed stimulant was not detected, THC was present more than 20% of the time. And some combination of a nonprescribed opioid or benzodiazepine, THC and/or cocaine was found more than 38% of the time. This proves that nonadherence is an issue with ADHD meds particularly Methylphenidate and Adderall.
- › Overall, 1,348 patient samples (32.9%) tested negative for the presence of the RX ADHD medication and 2,746 samples (67.1%) tested positive for the prescribed ADHD drug.
- › Patients RX'd methylphenidate were significantly less likely to have a negative test result than those RX'd an amphetamine ADHD medication (27.8% vs 33.8%)
- › Nonadherence among younger patients may be attributed to the way medication is managed by the parents.
- › This study concluded that early detection of nonadherence through urine drug monitoring is helpful across all patient groups, for both initial testing and for an ongoing basis to monitor patient's outcome.





# ANTIPSYCHOTIC MEDICATIONS

- › The third and final area of concern is monitoring for Antipsychotic medications. This provides objective measures for clinical decision and identifies opportunities for early intervention.
- › Who to test? Patients taking medications for mental illness, Schizophrenia, bipolar, severe anxiety, major depression.
- › When to test? Clinicians may choose to perform an initial test to evaluate the patient's therapeutic baseline.
- › What to test? Based on learnings from thousands of patient samples, it is recommended to test prescribed med and a comprehensive test including benzodiazepines, opioids and illicit drugs.
- › Studies have shown that 60% of patients with Serious Mental Illness are not adherent to their medication regimen.
- › Nonadherence leads to numerous negative clinical outcomes:
  - › Higher risks of relapse
  - › Higher rates of comorbid substance abuse
  - › Increased risk of suicide attempts
  - › More likely to be incarcerated



## HEROIN ISSUE

- › People can become tolerant to their medications, so if they are abusing their opioids and become tolerant, they don't experience the same high as they did the first time they started abusing. To increase their high, they may turn to a substance like Heroin, in some cases selling their RX med to do so.
- › Heroin is much stronger these days than it was years ago. In 1970 Heroin was 5% pure, as of 2011, 64% pure...
- › Heroin often has other substances cut into it to make it go further and to give it a much stronger high that is becoming fatal across the country.
- › Some of these substances are Fentanyl (powder) ordered on the black market over the internet and Carfentanil, an elephant tranquilizer that is 10,000X more potent than morphine and 100 X stronger than fentanyl.





## STREET VALUE

- › HEROIN COST IS APPROXIMATELY \$10 FOR ONE DOSE
- › OXYCONTIN street value is approximately 1/mg. ONE 80mg pill could get \$80.
- › Hydrocodone (Percocet, Norco) approx. \$15/pill
- › Adderall approx. \$15-20/pill



# CONCLUSION

- › According to the May 15, 2017 article found on Wallethub, written by John S. Kiernan, FROM 2013-2016 alone, American Taxpayers spent roughly \$327 BILLION on drug-control efforts. (programs initiated by individual states)

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR URINE DRUG MONITORING STATES:

- › The role of urine drug monitoring can be summarized by “The Five P’s”
  - › 1 **PROTECT** patients
  - › 2 **PROTECT** practitioners
  - › 3 **PROTECT ACCESS** (opioid availability for medical necessity)
  - › 4 **PROTECT** the community and society
  - › 5 **PROMOTE** the cost effective use of health care resources
- › MEDICATION MONITORING IS A NECESSARY TOOL TO GET INFORMATION YOU MAY NOT OTHERWISE HAVE. THE MORE SPECIFIC TESTING YOU USE THE BETTER THE INFORMATION YOU RECEIVE, THE MORE INFORMED YOU ARE TO TREAT YOUR PATIENTS.