

IROQUOIS HEALTHCARE ASSOCIATION (IHA)
OPIOID ALTERNATIVE PROJECT
Communications
Toolkit



Project Contacts

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To assist your hospital in successfully implementing the Iroquois Healthcare Association (IHA) Opioid Alternative Project, we have developed a toolkit intended to help your facility communicate to various audiences. This toolkit provides several communication tools to assist your organization in effectively messaging the purpose and goals of the program. The following communications are included:

- Newsletter article
- Press release
- Media talking points
- IHA Opioid Alternative Project PowerPoint presentations
- Staff emails
- Website content

For communications-related questions,
please contact Amelia Trigg.

For IHA Opioid Alternative Project questions,
please contact Jessica Morelli.

Additional resources can be found at
www.iroquois.org/opioid-alternative-project.

Internal Newsletter Article

Over the past several years, drug overdose has become the leading cause of accidental death in the United States. Approximately 11.4 million Americans misused prescription pain medicine in 2016 and 2017, according to HHS. In fact, opioid painkillers are notoriously known for being the driving force in the rise of substance abuse and lethal overdoses. Both federal and state government, as well as the public, has called for reform. Our hospital and our clinicians are in a unique and influential position to fight this epidemic, particularly in the emergency department (ED).

That is why [ORGANIZATION NAME] has decided to participate in the Iroquois Healthcare Association (IHA) Opioid Alternative Project with the goal of reducing opioid administrations in the ED. This project employs new pain management guidelines, focusing on alternatives to opioids (ALTOs) as a first resort in treating painful conditions. [ORGANIZATION NAME]'s goal is still to manage painful conditions for our ED patients and return them to a maximum quality of life while also recognizing and controlling the inherent risks of prescribing highly addictive medications like opioids.

This project was piloted by Iroquois Healthcare Association, representing 54 hospitals and health systems across 32 counties of Upstate New York. [ORGANIZATION NAME] is proud to begin implementing these guidelines in our own ED and looks forward to the positive impact they will have on our patients and on our community.

We will be implementing the project on [DATE], so please support our ED providers and staff as we move to effect this change.

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact
Organization Name
Phone Number
Email Address

[ORGANIZATION NAME] Announces Participation in Iroquois Healthcare Association Opioid Alternative Project with Aim of Reducing Opioid Administration in Emergency Department

[LOCATION] – [DATE]

[ORGANIZATION NAME] has joined the Iroquois Healthcare Association (IHA) Opioid Alternative Project to reduce the administration of opioids in the hospital’s emergency department (ED).

“Emergency rooms are often the first contact patients have with opioid pain killers,” said Gary J. Fitzgerald, President of IHA. “Upstate New York hospitals are in a strong position to reduce opioid use, particularly as their EDs provide care for increasing patient populations vulnerable and at risk for opioid abuse and addiction.”

[ORGANIZATION NAME]’s goal is to improve pain management for its patients and return them to a maximum quality of life while also recognizing and controlling the inherent risks of prescribing highly addictive medications like opioids. [ORGANIZATION NAME]’s clinicians are dedicated to understanding and responding appropriately to their patients’ physical and emotional symptoms of pain in addition to taking steps to help the community combat the ongoing opioid epidemic. This program is an important initiative to reduce the use of opioids that can cause addiction.

[QUOTE FROM HOSPITAL SOURCE ABOUT WHY HOSPITAL CHOSE TO PARTICIPATE]

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[ORGANIZATION BOILERPLATE]

Media Talking Points

Key Messages:

- [ORGANIZATION NAME] is proud to join the Iroquois Healthcare Association (IHA) Opioid Alternative Project, a groundbreaking initiative that allows Upstate New York EDs to become part of the solution in tackling the opioid epidemic.
- Through our partnership with IHA, [ORGANIZATION NAME] now has the ability to treat pain in ways that are proven to be effective without unnecessarily exposing ED patients to the risks associated with opioids.
- Minimizing patients' initial exposure to opioid medications is a crucial step in every hospital's role to fight the opioid epidemic, and we believe it is important to implement this proven initiative because of the positive impact it can have on the community we serve.

Some pilot hospital EDs reported questions/criticism about their facility being “opioid free” and not being available to help patients that may need an opioid. This message might be helpful if your organization faces some of those questions.

Reactive Message:

- The ED at [organization] is not changing to be “opioid free.” We still recognize that there are patients and conditions that are appropriate to treat with opioids and do offer them if alternative therapies fail. Our ED providers and staff will continue to accommodate all patients' needs.

Staff Emails

Prior to Implementation

Hello staff,

[ORGANIZATION NAME] has joined the Iroquois Healthcare Association (IHA) Opioid Alternative Project and has pledged to adopt new pain treatment protocols in our emergency department. The purpose of these guidelines is to reduce the administration of opioids while still treating pain appropriately through the usage of alternatives to opioids (ALTOs).

[ORGANIZATION NAME]'s emergency department will launch this program on [DATE] and looks forward to seeing the positive impact these new guidelines will have on our patients and our community.

Please support our emergency department clinicians and staff as we move to implement this new program.

Thank you for your excellent care,
[SIGNATURE]

Prior to Implementation

All staff,

This is a reminder that [ORGANIZATION NAME] will be implementing the Iroquois Healthcare Association (IHA) Opioid Alternative Project treatment guidelines in our emergency department on [DATE].

Our goal is still to improve pain management for our patients and return them to a maximum quality of life while also recognizing and controlling the inherent risks of prescribing highly addictive medications like opioids. [ORGANIZATION NAME] is proud to be a part of this important project, and we are excited to see what this program will achieve for our hospital and our patients.

Thank you for all you do,
[SIGNATURE]

Post Implementation

Hello staff,

Our emergency department has successfully implemented the Iroquois Healthcare Association (IHA) Opioid Alternative Project! Starting on [IMPLEMENTATION DATE], our ED clinicians began using the alternatives to opioids (ALTO) treatment guidelines to reduce the administration of opioids while still treating our patients' pain effectively. These guidelines have been proven to be effective in other EDs, and [ORGANIZATION NAME] is very pleased to be bringing this change into our hospital and to our community as a whole.

This is an important step in reversing the opioid epidemic here in Upstate New York. This issue is impacting far too many members of our community, and it is time that we begin to lead the change; it is our responsibility to our patients and to our community. We will continue to update you as we progress through this initiative.

Thank you for supporting our ED clinicians and staff through this transition and for your ongoing dedication to our patients.
[SIGNATURE]

Recommended placement – ED webpage

[ORGANIZATION NAME] has elected to participate in the Iroquois Healthcare Association (IHA) Opioid Alternative Project, a program that aims to reduce the administration of opioids in [Upstate] New York emergency departments (EDs). [ORGANIZATION NAME]'s goal is to help patients improve pain management, return them to a maximum level of function and independence and ultimately, restore their quality of life. Our hospital and clinicians are committed to understand and individually treat patients' physical and emotional symptoms of pain.

New York is at the center of the U.S. opioid epidemic. Upstate New York hospitals, particularly their EDs, are in a strong position to integrate new, more effective pain management treatments that are tailored to each patient's unique pain experience.

This project was piloted by Iroquois Healthcare Association, a regional trade organization representing 54 hospitals and health systems across 32 counties of Upstate New York.

For questions, contact [ORGANIZATION CONTACT – ONE-POINT PERSON IS RECOMMENDED].

Optional Reactive Message:

Some pilot hospital EDs reported questions/criticism about their facility being “opioid free” and not being available to help patients that may need an opioid. This message might be helpful if your organization faces some of those questions.

- “The ED at [organization] is not changing to be “opioid free.” We still recognize that there are patients and conditions that are appropriate to treat with opioids and do offer them if alternative therapies fail. Our ED providers and staff will continue to accommodate all patients' needs.”



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Healthcare Association

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