Use and Misuse of Opioid Drugs Fact Sheet

Student-Athlete and Parent/Guardian Sign-Off

In accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:40-41.10, public school districts, approved private schools for students with disabilities, and nonpublic schools participating in an interscholastic sports program must distribute this Opioid Use and Misuse Educational Fact Sheet to all student-athletes and cheerleaders. In addition, schools and districts must obtain a signed acknowledgement of receipt of the fact sheet from each student-athlete and cheerleader, and for students under age 18, the parent or guardian must also sign.

This sign-off sheet is due to the appropriate school personnel as determined by your district prior to the first official practice session of the spring 2018 athletic season (March 2, 2018, as determined by the New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association) and annually thereafter prior to the student-athlete’s or cheerleader’s first official practice of the school year.

Name of School:

Name of School District (if applicable):

I/We acknowledge that we received and reviewed the Educational Fact Sheet on the Use and Misuse of Opioid Drugs.

________________________                 _____________
Student Signature                      Date

________________________                 _____________
Parent/Guardian Signature              Date

¹Does not include athletic clubs or intramural events.
School athletics can serve an integral role in students’ development. In addition to providing healthy forms of exercise, school athletics foster friendships and camaraderie, promote sportsmanship and fair play, and instill the value of competition. Unfortunately, sports activities may also lead to injury and, in rare cases, result in pain that is severe or long-lasting enough to require a prescription opioid painkiller. It is important to understand that overdoses from opioids are on the rise and are killing Americans of all ages and backgrounds. Families and communities across the country are coping with the health, emotional and economic effects of this epidemic.

This educational fact sheet, created by the New Jersey Department of Education as required by state law (N.J.S.A. 18A:40-41.10), provides information concerning the use and misuse of opioid drugs in the event that a health care provider prescribes a student-athlete or cheerleader an opioid for a sports-related injury. Student-athletes and cheerleaders participating in an interscholastic sports program (and their parent or guardian, if the student is under age 18) must provide their school district written acknowledgment of their receipt of this fact sheet.

What Are Some Ways Opioid Use and Misuse Can Be Prevented?

According to the New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association (NJSIAA) Sports Medical Advisory Committee chair, John P. Kripsak, D.O., “Studies indicate that about 80 percent of heroin users started out by abusing narcotic painkillers.”

The Sports Medical Advisory Committee, which includes representatives of NJSIAA member schools as well as experts in the field of healthcare and medicine, recommends the following:

- The pain from most sports-related injuries can be managed with non-narcotic medications such as acetaminophen, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medications like ibuprofen, naproxen or aspirin. Read the label carefully and always take the recommended dose, or follow your doctor’s instructions. More is not necessarily better when taking over-the-counter (OTC) pain medication, and it can lead to dangerous side effects.
- Ice therapy can be utilized appropriately as an anesthetic.
- Always discuss with your physician exactly what is being prescribed for pain and request to avoid narcotics.
- In extreme cases, such as severe trauma or post-surgical pain, opioid pain medication should not be prescribed for more than five days at a time;
- Parents or guardians should always control the dispensing of pain medications and keep them in a safe, non-accessible location; and
- Unused medications should be disposed of immediately upon cessation of use. Ask your pharmacist about drop-off locations or home disposal kits like Deterra or Medsaway.
**What Are Some Ways to Reduce the Risk of Injury?**

Half of all sports medicine injuries in children and teens are from overuse. An overuse injury is damage to a bone, muscle, ligament, or tendon caused by repetitive stress without allowing time for the body to heal. Children and teens are at increased risk for overuse injuries because growing bones are less resilient to stress. Also, young athletes may not know that certain symptoms are signs of overuse.

The best way to deal with sports injuries is to keep them from happening in the first place. Here are some recommendations to consider:

- **PREPARE** Obtain the preparticipation physical evaluation prior to participation on a school-sponsored interscholastic or intramural athletic team or squad.

- **PLAY SMART** Try a variety of sports and consider specializing in one sport before late adolescence to help avoid overuse injuries.

- **TRAINING** Increase weekly training time, mileage or repetitions no more than 10 percent per week. For example, if running 10 miles one week, increase to 11 miles the following week. Athletes should also cross-train and perform sport-specific drills in different ways, such as running in a swimming pool instead of only running on the road.

- **PROPER EQUIPMENT** Wear appropriate and properly fitted protective equipment such as pads (neck, shoulder, elbow, chest, knee, and shin), helmets, mouthpieces, face guards, protective cups, and eyewear. Do not assume that protective gear will prevent all injuries while performing more dangerous or risky activities.

- **CONDITIONING** Maintain a good fitness level during the season and offseason. Also important are proper warm-up and cooldown exercises.

- **ADEQUATE HYDRATION** Keep the body hydrated to help the heart more easily pump blood to muscles, which helps muscles work efficiently.

- **REST UP** Take at least one day off per week from organized activity to recover physically and mentally. Athletes should take a combined three months off per year from a specific sport (may be divided throughout the year in one-month increments). Athletes may remain physically active during rest periods through alternative low-stress activities such as stretching, yoga or walking.

### Resources for Parents and Students on Preventing Substance Misuse and Abuse

The following list provides some examples of resources:

- **National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence – NJ** promotes addiction treatment and recovery.

- **New Jersey Department of Health, Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services** is committed to providing consumers and families with a wellness and recovery-oriented model of care.

- **New Jersey Prevention Network** includes a parent’s quiz on the effects of opioids.

- **Operation Prevention Parent Toolkit** is designed to help parents learn more about the opioid epidemic, recognize warning signs, and open lines of communication with their children and those in the community.

- **Parent to Parent NJ** is a grassroots coalition for families and children struggling with alcohol and drug addiction.

- **Partnership for a Drug Free New Jersey** is New Jersey’s anti-drug alliance created to localize and strengthen drug-prevention media efforts to prevent unlawful drug use, especially among young people.

- **The Science of Addiction: The Stories of Teens** shares common misconceptions about opioids through the voices of teens.

- **Youth IMPACTing NJ** is made up of youth representatives from coalitions across the state of New Jersey who have been impacting their communities and peers by spreading the word about the dangers of underage drinking, marijuana use, and other substance misuse.

### References

1. Massachusetts Technical Assistance Partnership for Prevention
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
3. New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association (NJSIAA) Sports Medical Advisory Committee (SMAC)
4. Athletic Management, David Csillan, athletic trainer, Ewing High School, NJSIAA SMAC
5. National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases
6. USA TODAY
7. American Academy of Pediatrics

An online version of this fact sheet is available on the New Jersey Department of Education’s Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drug Use webpage. Updated Jan. 30, 2018.