

Achieving Balance in State Pain Policy

Analysis of 2015 Data



Federal and state laws and regulations can promote or inhibit the provision of good pain care. Pain & Policy Studies Group (PPSG) has developed a peer-reviewed, validated, approach for evaluating the extent to which state policies may enhance or impede pain care. With input from a multidisciplinary panel of experts, a method was designed to assign grades (from A to F) to each state.

Grades are reflective of policies in place and don't reflect actual practice, so patient experiences may be changing even if regulations aren't, based on changing societal concerns about use of pain medicines.

Grades are based on 16 evaluation criteria:

- All states' relevant policies were reviewed using the criteria below.
- Positive and negative provisions were counted and a grade was calculated for each state.

Positive provisions: Policy language with the potential to enhance pain management:

1. Controlled substances are recognized as necessary for the public health
2. Pain management is recognized as part of general healthcare practice
3. Medical use of opioids is recognized as legitimate professional practice
4. Pain management is encouraged
5. Practitioners' concerns about regulatory scrutiny are addressed
6. Prescription amount alone is recognized as insufficient to determine the legitimacy of prescribing
7. Physical dependence or analgesic tolerance are not confused with "addiction"
8. Other provisions that may enhance pain management

Negative provisions: Policy language with the potential to impede pain management:

1. Opioids are relegated as only a treatment of last resort
2. Medical use of opioids is implied to be outside legitimate professional practice
3. Physical dependence or analgesic tolerance are confused with "addiction"
4. Medical decisions are restricted
5. Length of prescription validity is restricted
6. Practitioners are subject to additional prescription requirements
7. Other provisions that may impede pain management
8. Provisions that are ambiguous

States play an important role and need to continue to be guided by science and medicine to maintain balanced policies that ensure cancer patients have appropriate access to pain relief.

State Grades: 2008, 2012, 2013, 2015



	2008	2012	2013	2015
ALABAMA	B+	B+	A	A
ALASKA	C+	C+	C+	B+
ARIZONA	B+	B+	B+	B+
ARKANSAS	B	B	B	B
CALIFORNIA	B	B+	B+	B+
COLORADO	B	B	B	B
CONNECTICUT	B+	B+	B+	B+
DELAWARE	C+	B+	B+	B+
DIST. OF COLUMBIA	C+	B	B	B
FLORIDA	B	B	B	B
GEORGIA	B	A	A	A
HAWAII	B	B	B	B
IDAHO	B	B+	A	A
ILLINOIS	C	C	C	B
INDIANA	C+	C+	B	B+
IOWA	B	A	A	A
KANSAS	A	A	A	A
KENTUCKY	B	B+	B+	B+
LOUISIANA	C	C+	C+	C+
MAINE	B+	A	A	A
MARYLAND	B	B+	B+	B+
MASSACHUSETTS	A	A	A	B
MICHIGAN	A	A	A	A
MINNESOTA	B+	B+	B+	B+
MISSISSIPPI	C+	C+	B	B+
MISSOURI	C+	C+	C+	C
MONTANA	B	A	A	C+
NEBRASKA	B+	B+	B+	B
NEVADA	C	C	C+	C+
NEW HAMPSHIRE	B	B+	B+	B+
NEW JERSEY	B	B	B	B
NEW MEXICO	B+	B+	B+	B
NEW YORK	C+	B	B	B
NORTH CAROLINA	B	B	B	B+
NORTH DAKOTA	B	B	B	B
OHIO	B	B+	B+	B+
OKLAHOMA	C+	C+	C+	C+
OREGON	A	A	A	A
PENNSYLVANIA	B	B	B	B+
RHODE ISLAND	B+	A	A	A
SOUTH CAROLINA	B+	B+	B+	B+
SOUTH DAKOTA	B	B+	B+	B
TENNESSEE	C	C	C	C+
TEXAS	C+	C+	C+	C+
UTAH	B+	B+	B+	B+
VERMONT	B+	A	A	A
VIRGINIA	A	A	A	A
WASHINGTON	B+	A	A	A
WEST VIRGINIA	B	B+	B+	B+
WISCONSIN	A	A	A	A
WYOMING	C+	B+	B+	B+

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Individual policy profiles for all states and detailed information about the methodology and criteria used for evaluation can be found on:

www.acscan.org/painreportcard