Opioid Adverse Drug Events (ADEs)

DEFINITIONS:

CDC: An adverse drug event (ADE) is when someone is harmed by a medicine.¹

CMS: An injury resulting from drug-related medical interventions.²

QUICK FACT ABOUT ADES:

• It is generally estimated that about half of ADEs are preventable.³

• Antidiabetic meds, anticoagulants/antiplatelet meds and opioids account for more than 50% of Medicare patient Emergency Department (ED) visits.³

• Each year, ADEs account for nearly 700,000 ED visits and 100,000 hospitalizations.³

COMMON EFFECTS OF OPIOID ADEs²:

- Hallucinations or delusions
- Confusion or dizziness
- Falls
- Lethargy/somnolence or unresponsiveness
- Decreased respiration or decreased blood pressure/heart rate
- Constipation, abdominal pain or inability to urinate

OCCURRENCES THAT COULD POINT TO AN OPIOID ADE²:

- Administration of naloxone
- Transfer to hospital
- Contact physician due to onset of new symptoms
- Use of a benzodiazepine
- Order for an abdominal x-ray
- Addition of a laxative or stool softener
- Loss of coordination
- Addition of a new medication
- Removal of a medication

¹ https://www.cdc.gov/medicationsafety/adult_adversedrugevents.html
³ https://psnet.ahrq.gov/primer/medication-errors-and-adverse-drug-events