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**Framingham Health Department and Boston University Collaboration Results in New Education Program to Better Inform Young Patients about Opioids and Safeguard Against Addiction**

**Framingham, MA** – The Framingham Health Department and Boston University School of Medicine (BUSM) collaborated to develop a new program to better inform young patients about opioids and safeguard against potential addiction.

Developed by BUSM, the Safer/Competent Opioid Prescribing Education (SCOPE) of Pain program is designed to help health care providers use best practices when prescribing opioids. The Framingham Health Department worked with pediatric addiction specialists at BUSM to define the objectives of a pediatric training module (including the incorporation of specific material on medication treatment therapies for opioid use disorder and made content input during the planning and development process. Through the partnership, pediatric experts at BUSM were able to tailor the nationally recognized program to be appropriate for pediatric providers, calling it the Pediatric SCOPE of Pain program.

Funding for the pediatric program was made possible through the Massachusetts Opioid Addiction Prevention Collaborative (MOAPC) grant which was awarded to the Framingham Health Department in 2016 from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) Bureau of Substance Addiction Services.

“This program is about prevention through education,” said Kelly Joseph, Coordinator of the MetroWest MOAPC grant. “It is critical that pediatric providers understand the increased risk that opioid addiction poses for adolescents; know how to prescribe safely, as well as the viable alternatives; and how to appropriately advise and educate their patients.”

An Opioid is a classification of drugs that is used to alleviate pain. Opioids carry a serious risk of addiction, as well as fatal overdose. Opioids, like Oxycodone, Percocet or Vicodin can be legally prescribed by a doctor, or they can be obtained illegally, as is the case with Heroin and Fentanyl.

According to a [2017 report](#) published by the DPH, “more than two-thirds of people who died from an opioid-related overdose had a legal opioid prescription at some point from 2011–2014.” Despite



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significant efforts to better regulate, monitor, and enforce safe prescription practices, legal opioid prescriptions continue to be a source of first access for many who later develop an addiction to opioids. Until now, best practices for prescribing opioids have been limited to the adult population, leaving pediatric providers without guidance on how to treat their young patients.

Pediatric SCOPE of Pain is a one-hour online module that covers the impact of the opioid epidemic on adolescents, risk factors, and safe prescribing guidelines. This curriculum offers both Continuing Medical Education and Continuing Nursing Education credit.

To access the Pediatric SCOPE of Pain module, please visit <https://www.scopeofpain.org/supplemental-training/safer-opioid-prescribing-for-adolescents/>. For additional information about this project or to learn how you can bring a live version of this training to your medical group or practice, please call or email Kelly Joseph at the Framingham Health Department – (508) 532-5470; [kej@framinghamma.gov](mailto:kej@framinghamma.gov).

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