



Monday through Friday

8:00 A.M. to 8:00 P.M.

Saturdays & Holidays

9:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M.

Sundays & Christmas

Noon to 4:00 P.M.

IT'S ABOUT PAIN

A monthly service of Kirkpatrick Family Care

Vol. 1, Number 11, August 2017

DIVERTING RELATIVES: What to do: Narcan and Narc-ing

About once a month, we receive an (almost always) anonymous call that Joey or Jill is selling his/her pills.

Sometimes, this is a distraught relative or friend trying to help Jill/Joey, but sometimes it's retaliation for Joey/Jill declining to give or sell to the caller, who vows revenge. We take these calls seriously, generally talking to Joey/Jill about the accusations, obtaining a prompt pill count, running a Urinary Drug Screen, and checking the Pharmacy Modification Program website.

In addition, however, we recognize that these patients depend on their medications in order to have a decent quality of life. In fact, ruining that quality of life, may be the desired revenge of the shunned buyer. So this is a very difficult issue for us.

What can the relatives/friends do when they are certain about diversion? Well, first, if the patient is involved in diversion, they must realize that that patient is running a risk of intentional or unintentional overdose. So, I **suggest that the relatives obtain a vial of NARCAN so that they can revive the patient if overdose occurs.**

However, more likely to be of value to Joey/Jill is **information about the risks of the consequences** of diversion, including:

- Prosecution for "practicing medicine without a medical license"; by giving an oxycodone to a friend with a migraine, Joey/Jill are temporarily functioning as a physician or midlevel.
- Getting arrested by an undercover sting operation
- Being turned in by an informant addict
- Being assaulted by a buyer for being an alleged narcotics informant
- Being assaulted by a seller for being an alleged narcotics informant
- Being assaulted by a seller for being a competitor
- Being set up by drug dealers higher in the pecking order, to "take the fall"
- Being blackmailed by users or sellers
- Suffering horrible guilt if the donated/sold pill causes accidents, overdoses, strife, or arrest

"Assault" can be fatal.

Moreover, being arrested can ruin one's life for many years. I have one patient, as an example, who was arrested for merely giving a pill to a friend in pain. Consequences included loss of job, and because it involved working with children, loss of **career**.

Diversion, even in the name of altruism rather than financial gain, can be disastrous. If you are a patient taking opioids, I suggest you keep your pill bottles locked up and don't announce to friends or relatives that you are taking pain medicine. If you share even one pill, you could experience drastic consequences (see above). And if you give one pill to one person, he/she and friends, will be pestering you for more. Don't go there!