#ChoosePT: Electrotherapy as an Effective Alternative to Opioid Reduction

**Response to Opioid Crisis**

- **March 2016**: CDC Guidelines for Prescribing Opioids for Chronic Pain
- **June 2016**: The APTA launches the #ChoosePT Campaign
- **August 2016**: Surgeon General Turn the Tide Rx Campaign
- **September 2016**: First National Opioid and Heroin Epidemic Awareness Week
- **August 2017**: President declares opioid crisis a National Emergency

**Opioid Crisis – Prevalence and Consequences**

- **Deaths**
  - Since 1999, the number of overdose deaths involving opioids has quadrupled
  - More than 40 people die every day from overdoses involving prescription opioids
  - >6/10 drug overdose deaths involve an opioid

- **Other Risks**
  - Each day, more than 1000 people are treated in emergency departments for not using prescription opioids as directed
  - With an initial 10-day supply of opioids, 1 in 5 people become long-term users

- **Prescription**
  - 60% of adults prescribed opioids have leftover pills
  - 2015 per capita prescription opioid rates were enough for “every American to be medicated around the clock for 3 weeks”
  - 91% of people who survive an opioid overdose are prescribed more opioids

**Pain Modulation**

- **External Opioids**
  - Prolonged use can cause increased pain sensitivity which can lead to higher prescription dosage and risk of dependence
  - Numerous SIDE EFFECTS from external opioids – including addiction, respiratory depression, nausea/vomiting, constipation, tolerance, pruritus, dry mouth and headaches

- **Electrotherapy**
  - Evidence-based practice supports the use of electrotherapy as an effective alternative to opioid prescription
    - Primary Goal:
      - Provides symptomatic pain relief by activating natural physiological mechanisms, including release of the body’s natural opioids
    - Electrotherapy and External Opioids:
      - Use similar mechanisms of action to modulate the pain pathway
    - Efficacy:
      - Dependent on mindful and skilled application incorporating key elements (waveform frequency, electrode placement, intensity and frequency of application)

Electrotherapy should be considered as an alternative to pharmacological intervention in acute and chronic painful conditions.

For more information about clinical programming to address pain management, contact us today.