



Chronic Pain Management Guidelines

Goals

The goal of El Rio pain management is to provide humane and compassionate therapies to patients for chronic painful conditions as part of their primary medical care. We take your pain seriously and will ask you to arrange visits exclusively to discuss your pain management. The strategy we develop with you will change as we learn more about you and as you make healthy changes for yourself.

Core Principles

- El Rio believes that pain is part of life. Therefore, we aim to increase “function,” not to “eliminate pain.”
- We believe that you are ultimately responsible for managing your pain.
- We believe that medicines are only one part of pain management, that they must be used carefully, and only as part of a comprehensive strategy.

Practice Guidelines

- We will generally insist on assessing your mental health, social support, and lifestyle choices. This is part of Primary Care.
- We may suggest you change your lifestyle in some way. Those goals will be yours, but we will hold you accountable for them.
- We will always insist on physical exercise.
- We will always insist on honesty, and we will respect you with the same.
- We will always assess your level of function and work with you to set self-management goals.
- We will apply our medical judgment concerning appropriateness and standards in formulating a management plan. We will not do something just because a past doctor used to do it.
- We will refer you to specialist(s) if we believe additional expertise is needed.
- We may ask you to participate in group visits, so you can learn how others cope with chronic pain.
- Our clinicians will respect each others’ treatment decisions with appropriate review and discussion. If one provider has declined a specific treatment for you, we will not allow “doctor shopping.” If you disagree with the treatment prescribed by your provider, we have a review process.

We can not prescribe controlled substances to patients in the following categories:

1. Patients who refuse to enter into a “controlled substances agreement” with us.
2. Patients who are judged by us as unable to take their medications as prescribed.
3. Patients who have ever been arrested for selling or diverting prescription drugs.
4. Patients who have, in the last 5 years, been convicted of forging or altering a prescription, or felt by a medical provider to have done such.
5. Patients who behave belligerently to any staff, or who make threats against staff or property.
(Behavior of this type may result in termination from all of El Rio’s services as referenced in the El Rio Community Health Center Policy and Procedure for Immediate Disenrollment and in the Patient Care Review Committee Recommended Criteria for Disenrollment).
6. Patients who cannot secure their opiate prescriptions (e.g., lock the medicine in a safe place to prevent theft, etc.)

Marijuana Policy:

We do not prescribe medical marijuana.

Chronic pain is a complex condition. We respect that you have a painful condition and that you would like to feel better.

Our primary care providers need complete and accurate information in order to provide you with excellent care.

For these reasons, the following may be required in order to provide chronic pain care:

- ___ Full mutual releases of information for all previous medical providers and local emergency departments / urgent care centers, including releases for mental health and substance use information.
- ___ Complete medical records sent directly from previous providers. (See other side.)
- ___ Attendance at a 60 minute pain orientation class.
- ___ **Other** (PT evaluations, toxicology screens, etc.) as specified by provider: