

Introduction

- *The Joint Commission’s* two-pronged approach sets standards for safe opioid prescribing:
 - identifying patients with concurrent prescriptions of opioids and/or benzodiazepines
 - discouraging providers from prescribing two or more opioids or a concomitant benzodiazepines prescription.¹
- The *Defense Health Agency's (DHA) Strategic Plan Fiscal Year 2023-2028* involves mitigating errors through continuous improvement to enhance safety.²
- The *ORYX* measurement requirements support Joint Commission-accredited organizations in their quality improvement efforts.
- Safe opioid prescribing within the *Military Health System (MHS)* upon inpatient hospitalization discharge is tightly regulated.

Objectives

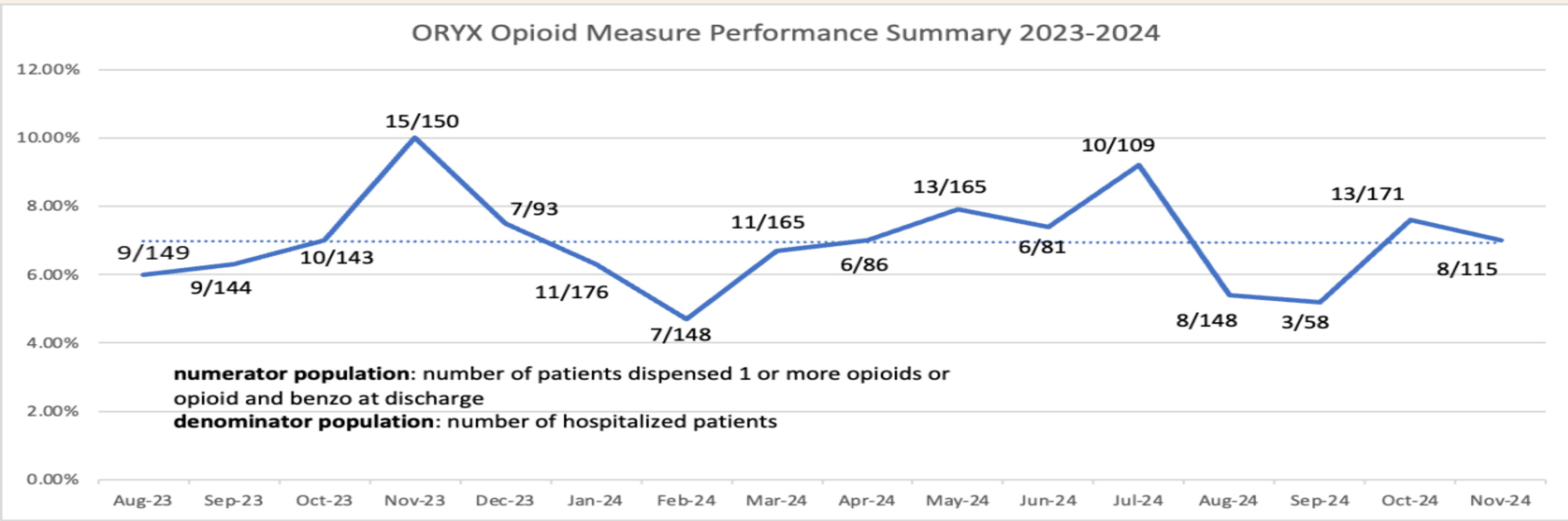
- The *ORYX MHS* report aims to highlight five key objectives on how regional anesthesiologists may contribute to the guidelines:
1. Increasing awareness amongst regional anesthesiologists on the Joint Commission’s requirement for safe discharge opioid prescribing
 2. Developing an early surveillance system for safe opioid prescribing
 3. Monitoring the trends in safe discharge opioid prescribing
 4. Implementing a notification system to identify patient cases with unsafe opioid prescription(s)
 5. Assessing appropriateness of when and how to prescribe opioids, as well as incorporating collaboration amongst anesthesia and surgery providers

Methods

- This is a prospective chart review of EHR and prescription fill data of inpatient military beneficiaries.

Inclusion	Exclusion
• 18 years of age or older • Prescribed 1+ new or continuing opioid or benzodiazepine at discharge	• patients with cancer that began prior to or during the encounter • receiving palliative or hospice care during the encounter • patients discharged to another inpatient care facility • patients who expired during the inpatient stay

- *ORYX* Opioid Reports were generated from August 2023 to November 2024.
- The performance score metric was a percentage (Figure 1):
 - the numerator population = those prescribed the criteria of opioids/benzodiazepine(s)
 - the denominator population = inpatient military beneficiaries with stays less than or equal to 120 days



Monthly performance scores ranged from 4.7% (*February 2024*) to 10% (*November 2023*), with no increasing/decreasing trends. Average monthly performance score was 6.95%.

Discussion

- The lack of upward trends in performance scores may indicate successful implementation of guidelines, policy changes, and risk mitigation by the DHA in the MHS, thus limiting unsafe prescribing of opioids.
- Recent initiatives include the MHS prescription monitoring system, the release of *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)* guidelines on oral opioid prescribing, the *Veterans Affairs/Department of Defense (VA/DOD)* clinical practice guidelines, and naloxone prescribing.^{3,4,5}
- The DHA's initiatives may serve as a model across other health systems to ensure close monitoring of safe opioid prescribing amongst different medical specialties, such as regional anesthesiology.

Conclusions

- No immediate interventions are warranted, but it is necessary to continue increasing awareness, education, and monitoring on safe opioid prescribing.
- Development of an early surveillance and notification system to identify individual patient cases or trends may increase health outcomes.
- Future research may investigate the risks and benefits of appropriate hospitalization discharge prescribing and how regional anesthesiologists can educate and collaborate with the surgical team on adequate but safe pain control.

References:
1. 2023 Annual Updates for 2024 Reporting Year CMS506 Safe Use of Opioids - Concurrent Prescribing, January 11, 2024.
2. The Defense Health Agency Strategic Plan for fiscal years 2023-2028, July 31, 2023
3. Begley MR, Ravindran C, Peltzman T, et al. Veteran drug overdose mortality, 2010-2019. *Drug Alcohol Depend.* 2022;233:109296. doi:10.1016/j.drugalcdep.2022.109296
4. Dowell D, Ragan KR, Jones CM, Baldwin GT, Chou R. CDC Clinical Practice Guideline for Prescribing Opioids for Pain United States, 2022. *MMWR Recommendations and Reports* 2022;71(No. RR-3):1-9. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.rr7103a1>.
5. Pain Management and Opioid Safety in Military Medical Treatment Facilities. Defense Health Agency Administrative Instruction Number 6025.08 February 8, 2023