**Medical Review Board (MRB) Discussion on U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Warnings on Narcotics and Benzodiazepines and Incorporation Into Medical Examiner Forms**

**Discussion Notes**

**October 25, 2016, MRB Meeting**

1. **Concerns**
   1. The MRB discussed concerns around incorporating the August 31, 2016, FDA warnings on narcotics and benzodiazepines[[1]](#footnote-1) into the Certified Medical Examiner (CME) form developed and submitted with the 2014 joint MCSAC-MRB recommendations relating to the use of Schedule II medications by CMV drivers, “391.41 CMV Driver Medication Questionnaire.”
      1. Currently, the form is in the process of final Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approval.
   2. Multiple organizations (e.g. FDA, Centers for Disease Prevention and Control (CDC), American College of Physicians) are raising a concern with the combination and use of narcotics and benzodiazepines.
   3. The concern around narcotics, benzodiazepines, and muscle relaxers is not clearly addressed in the questionnaire that was developed and submitted with the 2014 joint MCSAC-MRB recommendations relating to the use of Schedule II medications by CMV drivers, “391.41 CMV Driver Medication Questionnaire.”
   4. Frontline providers must take into consideration that under certain conditions, drivers cannot drive while taking these medications.
   5. Doctors are receiving pushback from drivers if they prohibit them from driving when they are using narcotics and/or benzodiazepines and it is affecting their performance ratings.
   6. The MRB agrees with the August 31, 2016, FDA statement and shares its concerns as it relates to CMV drivers.
   7. The MRB hopes that FMCSA will direct CMEs to look at the FDA warnings on serious risk.
2. **MRB Recommendations**
   1. MRB Recommendation: The following statement relating to the August 31, 2016, FDA warnings should be issued as a stand-alone statement and/or should be added to the CME form relating to driver medications:
      1. The Medical Review Board (MRB) of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration recognizes the August 31, 2016, Food and Drug Administration warning regarding opioids, benzodiazepines, and other central nervous system (CNS) depressants. The MRB recommends that Certified Medical Examiners (CMEs) and treating clinicians should be familiar with this warning, particularly the risks of extreme sleepiness, respiratory depression, and death. Healthcare professionals should consider these warnings prior to determining the driver’s ability to operate a commercial motor vehicle safely.
   2. MRB Recommendation:
      1. The following statement should be issued as a stand-alone statement and/or should be added to the CME form relating to driver medications:
         1. The Medical Review Board (MRB) of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration recognizes the March 18, 2016, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention “Guideline for Prescribing Opioids for Chronic Pain” and the risks for serious harm related to opioid therapy at a dosage greater than or equal to 50 morphine milligram equivalents (MME) per day. The MRB recommends that Certified Medical Examiners and treating clinicians should be familiar with this guideline, particularly the risks of misuse, addiction, overdose, and death. Healthcare professionals should consider this guideline prior to determining the driver’s ability to operate a commercial motor vehicle safely.
      2. Rationale: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) data[[2]](#footnote-2) show that MME above 50 double the risk of overdose and death.

1. *See* <http://www.fda.gov/NewsEvents/Newsroom/PressAnnouncements/ucm518697.htm> (last accessed Nov. 14, 2016). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. *See* <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/65/rr/pdfs/rr6501e1.pdf> (last accessed Nov. 14, 2016). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)