

What is a Non-Opioid Directive?

A non-opioid directive is a legal document that allows patients to formally declare their wish to avoid opioids in their medical treatment. The directive is useful for individuals who have personal, medical, or familial reasons to avoid opioids, those concerned about the risk of addiction, or those who prefer alternative pain management strategies.

Key Benefits:

1. Reduction of Opioid Misuse and Addiction

- According to the CDC, 1 in 4 patients prescribed opioids long-term in a primary care setting struggle with addiction.
- The Directive offers individuals—especially those with a history of substance use disorder or a higher risk of dependency—a proactive way to manage pain without opioids.
- 10 other states, including Alaska, Connecticut, Florida, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and West Virginia, have implemented Voluntary Non-Opioid Directive legislation, with bills pending in New Jersey and Maryland.



2. Enhanced Patient-Provider Communication

- The Directive encourages discussions about substance use history and risks associated with opioids, supporting informed decision-making.
- Healthcare providers can guide patients toward evidence-based non-opioid pain management alternatives.

3. A Standardized, Easily Accessible Tool

- By hosting the form on the MDH website, Minnesota patients, doctors, and pharmacists can easily access, download, and use this tool.
- Standardizing the process across medical settings helps avoid inconsistencies and ensures healthcare professionals recognize the form statewide.

4. Protecting Healthcare Professionals and Ensuring Emergency Care

- The Directive includes liability protections for healthcare professionals while allowing flexibility when opioids are medically necessary.
- In emergencies where a patient is incapacitated and no Directive is found, providers can still administer opioids if necessary without violating the law.
- The Directive can be revoked at any time verbally or in writing, ensuring patient autonomy.