

New CDC Recommendation: Ignore Patients with Pain > 4

ATLANTA, GA - The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) has issued a new recommendation on the heels of March's "[CDC Guideline for Prescribing Opioids for Chronic Pain](#)," citing new data analysis from its task force on opioid abuse. The new recommendation is rather blunt: "Just ignore patients who have a pain score greater than 4. Really."



CDC's new recommendation slogan:
"Greater than 4, ignore"

"Look, here's the deal. When you say your pain is 1, 2, 3, or 4, that's actually believable to health care providers, so we'll give you Tylenol, maybe even an NSAID," explained the [Director of the CDC Dr. Thomas Frieden](#). "When you start getting into that 5 through 9 territory, it starts getting a little suspicious. And we all know that [pain of 10 or greater than 10](#) is, well, honestly, just bullsh*t. So greater than 4? Ignore."

The CDC recommendation is a fierce rebuttal against the Joint Commission's April mandate to have a [pain scale that goes to infinity](#). Citing the most reliable sources available - nurses who deal with pain scales and lying patients every day - the CDC found that any pain score "greater than 4, whether it's 5 or 1,000,005, is totally unreliable and therefore useless."

This latest recommendation should further crack down on the abuse of [opioids](#). Prior to this announcement, most health care providers were hesitant to prescribe opioids unless pain was greater than 6. With pain scores greater than 4 being ignored, that technically makes no one a candidate to receive opioid

mediation and that's just fine to health care providers. In fact, they're ecstatic.

"In today's health care climate half of my day is spent arguing with patients about opioids," said primary care physician Jamela Wilson. "The other half of my day? Arguing with patients' significant others about opioids. But now, pain greater than 4? Have a nice day." Wilson is working with her nursing staff on "Have a nice day!" stickers to slap on patients as they show them the door.

The CDC is urging health care providers not to tell patients about the new recommendation until after the pain assessment. "Obviously, if they know 4 is the pain cut off, everyone's going to be saying '4' all the time, in the same way [respiratory rates are always 16](#). But if you get them to say '20' first, then you know you can send that patient home and move along with your day, which is really what we all want, right?"