

Prescription Monitoring Program

Office of Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services

Maine Department of Health and Human Services

The Issue in Maine:

- ❑ Drug-related deaths have increased dramatically in recent years primarily because of prescription drug abuse. In 1997, there were 34 drug-related deaths; in 2009, there were 179. 80% to 90% of these cases involve a pharmaceutical drug in some way.
- ❑ The number of admissions to substance abuse treatment for prescription opiate addiction went from about 400 in SFY 1998 to above 4000 in SFY 2008.
- ❑ More and more teenagers are misusing prescription drugs. Of Maine's high school seniors, 24% say they have misused a prescription pain killer during their lifetime (2009 MIYHS).
- ❑ In 2008, the percentage of Maine Drug Enforcement Agency arrests that involved trafficking in prescription drugs was 39%.



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The Office of Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services administers the state's controlled substances Prescription Monitoring Program (PMP). Over four hundred pharmacies in and out of state are required to report all transactions for controlled substances (DEA Schedule Classes II-IV). These records are stored in a centralized database, in which health care providers can search for patients to determine their prescription histories. Created to prevent and detect prescription drug abuse, the PMP is rapidly becoming a standard health care tool. Nationally, PMPs have been shown to be effective at reducing access to prescription drugs of abuse.

Program Goals:

- ❑ Improve patient care by giving health care providers comprehensive information from one source
- ❑ Curb prescription drug misuse and abuse
- ❑ Get those who are addicted to drugs into appropriate substance abuse treatment
- ❑ Help prevent prescription drug-related deaths
- ❑ Ensure that those who do need prescription medications continue to receive them
- ❑ Educate the public on the dangers of prescription drug abuse
- ❑ Inform public policy surrounding prescription drug regulation with use of aggregate prescription monitoring data

Priority Populations:

Youth under age 18, young adults aged 18-25, and older adults – each age group has unique risks.

Program Activities:

- ❑ Licensed health care professionals (e.g., doctors, pharmacists) can register with the program to become "data requestors." The system is accessible through an online interface (www.maine.gov/pmp), or by fax or mail.
- ❑ Notification Reports: Automated algorithms generate monthly reports that are sent to prescribers and pharmacists to alert them when patients cross potentially dangerous threshold levels of drugs.
- ❑ SAMHS staff members conduct frequent training in the use of the system for health care professionals throughout Maine.
- ❑ Aggregate data is posted on SAMHS's web site periodically, and special reports are available upon request.

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