

The Prescription Drug Monitor

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2014 HR PDMP National Meeting results

The 10th Harold Rogers Prescription Drug Monitoring Program National Meeting, held in Washington, D.C. from September 22nd through 24th, was a tremendous success. Over 200 people registered for this two and a half day national meeting sponsored by the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA). The meeting attendees included twenty-eight PDMP administrators and twenty-three members of their staff, representing thirty-seven states and the District of Columbia. Attendees also included seventy-two representatives of state and federal agencies, forty-five representatives of other organizations and industry, PDMP Technical Assistance and Training Center (TTAC) staff and PDMP Center of Excellence (COE) staff also attended. The first day opened with BJA Director Denise O'Donnell providing opening remarks, followed by an impactful speech from Shannon Rickett with Congressman Harold 'Hal' Rogers office. Commissioner Cheryl Bartlett, Massachusetts Department of Public Health, detailed the efforts to combat opioid abuse being undertaken with the Northeast Governor's Initiative. Karin Mack, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), presented compelling results on opioid prescribing patterns in the United States. Representatives from BJA, CDC, Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) provided presentations and fielded audience questions on topics related to their respective agencies. Terence O'Leary (NY PDMPs) gave an interesting presentation about the New York State Department of Health's I-STOP program. The day ended with three research presentations: Optimizing PDMPs to Support Law Enforcement Activity, Non-medical Use of Prescription Drugs: Policy Change, Law Enforcement Activity, and Diversion Tactics, and Controlled Substance Prescribing Trends and Risk of Drug Overdose Deaths.

Day 2 opened with a presentation by Acting Director Botticelli from the Office of National Drug Control Policy, followed by law updates from the National Alliance for Model State Drug Laws

and analysis of the 2012 and 2014 state survey results by the PDMP Training and Technical Assistance Center (TTAC). There were also presentations covering innovative PDMP data uses, law enforcement outreach and training, PDMP and justice agency partnerships, interstate data sharing and health IT integration, status of data sharing with the Veterans Affairs Administration and Indian Health Services, and ending with the Florida and Montana PDMPs new initiatives.

The final day included presentations about the Prescription Behavior Surveillance System (PBSS) project and two states' (Oregon and Massachusetts) efforts related to prescriber outreach. Following the formal presentations, a group discussion was facilitated by Dave Hopkins (KY) on a wide range of topics that impact PDMPs. The meeting concluded with remarks by BJA Deputy Director Kristen Mahoney (BJA). Copies of the presentations are posted on the [TTAC website](#).

BJA Grant Announcements

The Bureau of Justice Assistance announced the FY 2014 Harold Rogers Prescription Drug Monitoring Program Grants. There are three categories for the grants: Implementation and Enhancement Grant; Tribal Prescription Drug Monitoring Program Data Sharing Grant; and Data-Driven Multi-Disciplinary Approaches to Reducing Rx Abuse Grant. Implementation and Enhancement Grants were awarded to Alabama, Arkansas, Maine, Massachusetts, New Mexico, Ohio, Vermont, and Wisconsin. A Tribal Prescription Drug Monitoring Program Data Sharing Grant was awarded to the Ho-Chunk Nation in Wisconsin. Data-Driven Multi-Disciplinary Approaches to Reducing Rx Abuse Grants were awarded to the Arizona Criminal Justice Commission, Executive Office of the Governor of Delaware, University of Kentucky Research Foundation, Northwestern District Attorney (Massachusetts), and New York County District Attorney's Office. View the [GRANT AWARDS](#).

COE Releases Updated Briefing on PDMP Effectiveness

The PDMP Center of Excellence (COE) at Brandeis has released a newly updated [Briefing on PDMP Effectiveness](#). First issued in 2012 with 35 references, the current version cites over 60 sources, including research studies, evaluations, surveys and other reports. The additional research provides further evidence supporting the conclusion that PDMPs are an effective tool in addressing the prescription drug abuse epidemic. The Briefing identifies the following areas in which PDMPs can play a significant role:

- Improving clinical decision-making and patient care
- Identifying and reducing doctor shopping and other diversion
- Reducing inappropriate prescribing and associated drug and medical costs
- Reducing prescription drug investigation times
- Monitoring compliance in drug courts and other criminal justice programs
- Assisting in substance abuse treatment
- Assisting medical examiners and coroners
- Assisting in drug abuse prevention and surveillance efforts

Data described in the Briefing also suggest that PDMPs are contributing to improvements in health outcomes, including declines in overdose deaths, emergency department visits and treatment admissions related to prescription opioids.

The Briefing can serve as an educational resource for distribution to stakeholders, legislatures and the general public on the value and effectiveness of PDMPs. It can be viewed [here](#), and for further information please visit www.pdmpexcellence.org.

Taking Control: Pathways to Drug Policies That Work

The Global Commission on Drug Policy developed a comprehensive approach to drug policy with recommendations to deal with the world-wide drug problem. The purpose of this commission is ‘to bring to the international level an informed, science based discussion about humane and effective ways to reduce the harm caused by drugs to people and society.’ Guided by the premise that the global drug prohibition has failed to reduce the negative health consequences associated with drugs and guarantee access to medicines, the Commission recommends five policy ‘pathways’:

- **Put people’s health and safety first** – invest in community protection, prevention, harm reduction, and treatment;
- **Ensure access to essential medicines and pain control** – remove political obstacles that prevent member states from ensuring adequate provisions of medicine;
- **End the criminalization and incarceration of people who use drugs** – decriminalize drug use and replace with a health-based approach;
- **Refocus enforcement responses to drug trafficking and organized crime** – direct enforcement resources to handle the most disruptive and violent elements in the drug trade; and
- **Regulate drug market to put governments in control** – apply different models of regulation for drugs according to the risk they pose.

According to the Commission, the report does not provide solutions, rather a roadmap for policy change that, they feel, will reduce drug-related problems in the world. You can read the [REPORT here](#).

2014 West Regional Meeting results

The PDMP Training and Technical Assistance Center (TTAC) facilitated the 2014 West Regional Meeting in Salt Lake City, UT on August 12th and 13th. PDMP representatives from Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Guam, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming, along with John Eadie (PDMP Center of Excellence), participated in this day and half meeting. Among the topics covered: Mandated Enrollment and Usage of the PDMP, New PDMP Initiatives, Health Information Exchanges and Integration with

PDMPs, and the Prescription Behavior Surveillance System Project. Copies of the presentations are available on the [TTAC website](#).

Did You Know?

- The CDC has posted information about state variations of opioid painkiller prescribing. The July 2014 Vital Signs report details not only the state prescribing rates, but also offers suggestions in how to deal with the abuse of opioid medicines. View the [WEBSITE](#).
- A Final Rule by the DEA was posted on September 9, 2014 governing the secure disposal of controlled substances by registrants and ultimate users. The rule expands the options for collecting controlled substances. Read the [RULE](#).
- The DEA posted their final rule concerning the rescheduling of hydrocodone combination products to Schedule II. Read the [RULE](#).
- With prescription overdose deaths garnering widespread attention, information from medical examiners and coroners has become increasingly valuable for research and analysis. SAMHSA held meetings with medical examiners, coroners, toxicologists, epidemiologists, and other health officials to develop recommended uniform standards and definitions in classifying deaths. The panel focused on four areas: scene investigation, toxicologic testing and analysis, case definitions, and determination and documentation of causality. Read the [RECOMMENDATIONS](#).
- The Drug Abuse Resistance Education program (DARE) has been replaced with a new course, “keepin’ it REAL.” The new program focuses on interactive lessons to help children make smart decisions about safety and responsibility. The instructors teach four ways to say “no” – **R**efuse, **E**xplain, **A**void, and **L**eave. Preliminary analysis of the program’s effectiveness has shown that “keepin’ it REAL” has reduced substance abuse and maintained antidrug attitudes over time. Read the [REPORT](#).
- The results from the 2013 National Survey on Drug Use and Health have been released by SAMHSA. Some of the 2013 findings: 9.4% of the population (12 years of age or older) were illicit drug users; 2.2% of adolescents (12 to 17) were nonmedical users of prescription drugs; 2.5% of adults (18 and older) were nonmedical users of prescriptions drugs. Read the [REPORT](#).
- The American Medicine Chest Challenge (AMCC) has posted an interactive tool on their website to locate prescription drop boxes around the country. View the [TOOL](#).
- The Society for Neuroscience has published preliminary study results showing that recreational use of marijuana by young adults impacts portions of the brain that control emotion and motivation. Previous research studied the impact on ‘heavy’ marijuana users. The results show that regions in the brains of casual marijuana users change in size and shape. Read the [STUDY](#).
- Findings from the 2005 to 2010 Drug Abuse Warning Network (DAWN) reveal that emergency room visits involving zolpidem overmedication almost doubled. Additionally,

47% of these visits resulted in being admitted to a hospital or other medical facility. Read the [RESULTS](#).

- The Governors from Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont issued a letter to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services urging that the FDA's approval of Zohydro ER be rescinded. Read the [LETTER](#).
 - The National Center for Health Statistics has published a report on drug poisoning deaths involving opioids. The report analyzes 1999 to 2011 data from the National Vital Statistics System, Mortality File. Some of the findings: poisoning deaths went from 1.4 per 100,000 in 1999 to 5.4 per 100,000 in 2011; benzodiazepines were involved in 31% of the deaths in 2011; adults aged 55-64 experienced the greatest increase in rate of poisoning deaths during the last decade. Read the [REPORT](#).
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PDMPs News and Updates

- **Colorado** – In July, an estimated \$28.9 million was spent on medical marijuana and \$29.7 million from retail marijuana. This marked the first time that retail marijuana sales surpassed medical marijuana sales. Read the [ARTICLE](#).
 - **Maryland** – Maryland's Governor has set a goal to reduce overdose deaths by 20% by the end of next year. The PDMP resides with the State's health department and the focus will be to get at risk patients and abusers into treatment. Read the [ARTICLE](#).
 - **New York** – A hospital pharmacy director was arrested for stealing almost 200,000 oxycodone pills since 2009. The director falsified electronic inventory records indicating that the pills were being sent to the hospital's research pharmacy. Read the [ARTICLE](#).
 - **Oregon** – The Oregon Pain Guidance group has created online guides and tools in response to opioid overdose deaths. Included guides and tools: assessment tools, drug screening, patient communication, treatment checklists, etc. Visit the [WEBSITE](#).
 - **South Carolina** – The Governor's Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention Council made the recommendation to apply an analytics program to the Prescription Drug Monitoring program. PDMP information will be compiled and automatically flag potential abuse and possible pill mills. Read the [ARTICLE](#).
 - **Tennessee** – Andy Holt has left his position as Director of the Tennessee Board of Pharmacy and the position will be assumed by Reginald Dilliard. Thank you, Andy, for all your work for the PDMP community and good luck in your future.
 - **Texas** -- A drug combination called 'gumbo' is increasing in southeast Texas. Gumbo is a marijuana cigar that has been laced with ecstasy, cocaine or PCP; in some instances, synthetic marijuana is used. Read the [ARTICLE](#).
 - **Wyoming** – The Wyoming Nurse Reporter published an article about the Wyoming Online Prescription database (WORx). The article details the program's success in reducing doctor shopping by 49% from 2013 to 2014. Read the [ARTICLE](#) (page 18).
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Articles for The Prescription Drug Monitor – If there are news items about your state’s PDMP or if you have information that you believe would be of interest to other readers of The Prescription Drug Monitor, please let us know. The items can be sent to info@pdmpassist.org.

PDMP Training and Technical Assistance Center Providing Assistance - Brandeis University’s PDMP Training and Technical Assistance Center (TTAC) continues to provide assistance to grantees, non-grantees, federal partners, and other stakeholders. If you need information, training, or other assistance related to PDMPs, please don’t hesitate to contact us. Your request will get immediate attention, including input from other states in our national PDMP network, if necessary. The TTAC can help with questions about program evaluation, operating costs, laws and regulations, vendors, advisory groups, education, and more.

You can reach the TTAC team by telephone 781-609-7741 or e-mail info@pdmpassist.org.

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