

Physicians' progress to reverse nation's opioid epidemic

Nation's opioid supply decreasing

Every state in the nation saw a reduction in opioid prescribing in 2015—an overall 10.6 percent decrease nationally.¹

From 2012 to 2015 there has been a steady decrease in sales of the most widely misused opioid analgesics.²

As PDMPs improve, physicians' use increases

State-based prescription drug monitoring programs (PDMPs) were checked nearly 85 million times in 2015—a 40 percent increase over 2014.⁶

Physicians' and other health care providers' registration to use PDMPs also increased from 464,698 in 2014 to 616,789 in 2015.⁶

Increases were seen in states with—and without—mandates to use a PDMP.

More physicians trained to treat opioid use disorders

From 2012 to 2016 there has been an 81 percent increase in physicians certified to treat substance use disorders—more than 33,000 across all 50 states.³

Prescriptions to help treat opioid use disorders increased by 11 percent from 2014 to 2015.⁴

Physicians taking more education

An AMA survey⁷ found that 49,903 courses related to opioid prescribing, pain management, or other related areas have been accessed and/or completed by physicians since October 2015.

New AMA-created continuing medical education (CME) products soon to be released:

- Statewide physician toolkits (in two pilot states) to highlight key resources to help reduce opioid-related harm, provide guidance on prescribing practices and direct patients to additional resources
- CME primer on the opioid epidemic
- Module for "Introduction to the Practice of Medicine" library—focus on residents

15 states showing decreases in total drug overdose deaths

According to the CDC, 15 states saw reductions in the numbers of people dying in 2014 compared to 2013 due to drug overdoses.⁵

Naloxone access laws, physician co-prescribing on the rise

In the second quarter of 2015, 4,291 prescriptions were dispensed, a 1,170 percent increase over prescriptions in the fourth quarter of 2013.⁸

AMA advocacy and widespread state medical society support has led to more than two dozen new state laws that increase access to naloxone—bringing the national total to more than 45 states with naloxone access laws.

AMA, nation's medical societies continue to urge action

Since October 2015 more than 4 million emails, social media posts and other communications urging physician action to reverse national opioid epidemic have been directed at physicians by the nation's medical societies.

1. IMS Health
2. DEA Office of Diversion Control, Automated Reports and Consolidated Ordering System, http://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/arcos/retail_drug_summary/index.html
3. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Association
4. IMS Health
5. MMWR/January 1, 2016/Vol. 64/Nos. 50&51
6. Based on an AMA survey and responses from 42 state PDMP administrators. Figures will be adjusted as new information becomes available.
7. AMA survey of 37 medical societies. New information will be added as it becomes available.
8. Am J Public Health. 2016 Apr;106(4):689-90. Jones et al. doi: 10.2105/AJPH.2016.303062. Epub 2016 Feb 18.

The AMA Task Force to Reduce Opioid Abuse

ama-assn.org/go/endopioidabuse

