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Governor Christie Strengthens New Jersey's Prescription Monitoring Program to Further Curb Prescription Drug Abuse

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Tags: [Addiction Taskforce](#)

Trenton, NJ - Empowering healthcare professionals with effective tools to join the fight against prescription drug abuse, Governor Chris Christie signed legislation that expands the New Jersey Attorney General's Division of Consumer Affairs Prescription Monitoring Program (NJMPMP), an online database that tracks the prescription sale of drugs classified as controlled dangerous substances (CDS). The bill, S-1998, expands existing law with regard to access, registration, and utilization of the NJMPMP. The new changes will help prevent "doctor shopping" that often occurs with prescription and opioid abuse.

"We have taken great strides in the fight against opiate abuse through a comprehensive strategy that encourages healthcare professionals, treatment providers, law enforcement, and members of the public to each embrace their role in addressing this healthcare crisis," Governor Christie said. "By signing S-1998, we're not only making the New Jersey Prescription Monitoring Program even stronger, we're demonstrating that by working together, we can all be part of the solution - a solution that fights the stigma of addiction, saves lives and helps rebuild families."

Currently, the NJMPMP contains data on more than 48.4 million prescriptions for CDS and human growth hormone. It has responded to more than 4 million data requests from licensed prescribers and pharmacists, including more than 180,000 requests made during the last 30 days alone.

S-1998 expands New Jersey healthcare professionals' access to the NJMPMP by, among other things, requiring that prescribers and pharmacists register for NJMPMP access, and requiring that physicians consult the NJMPMP under limited circumstances.

For example, the legislation mandates that physicians consult the online NJMPMP database the first time they prescribe a drug classified as a Schedule II CDS (such as oxycodone) to a patient for acute and chronic pain. They also must continue to consult the NJMPMP at least quarterly thereafter for patients that continue to receive such medications. In addition, pharmacists would be required to check the database prior to dispensing a Schedule II CDS if there is a reasonable belief that the patient may be seeking the prescription for any reason other than the treatment of a medical condition.

In addition, pharmacists are required to submit identifying information for any individual who picks up a prescription for a patient. It further requires pharmacies to submit information to the NJMPMP every seven days, rather than every 30 days as provided in current law. The Division of Consumer Affairs has notified pharmacies that, as of September 1, 2015, it will require them to report information to the NJMPMP on a daily basis, no more than one business day after the date the CDS was dispensed.

"The Medical Society of New Jersey is committed to reducing prescription medication abuse and diversion," said Mishael Azam, Esq., Senior Manager for Legislative Affairs at the Medical Society of New Jersey. "As such, we have long advocated for the Prescription Monitoring Program to be a more user-friendly tool for prescribers. This bill improves data quality, accessibility, interoperability and reliability. We commend Governor Christie for investing in the PMP."

In an effort to promote greater NJMPMP usage, the Division of Consumer Affairs launched an awareness campaign and streamlined the registration process to grant automatic enrollment to prescribers upon the annual renewal of their State registration to prescribe or dispense CDS. These efforts have increased the registration of physicians by more than

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400 percent, and the registration of all eligible healthcare professionals by more than 250 percent, in a single year. Today, 88 percent of eligible physicians and 69 percent of all eligible prescribers and pharmacists are enrolled.

To further enhance the NJPMP's usefulness to healthcare professionals, the Division launched a first-in-the-nation mobile app that allows prescribers and pharmacists to access the NJPMP via smartphones and tablets in April 2015.

S-1998, was sponsored by Senators Loretta Weinberg, Joseph F. Vitale, and James W. Holzapfel, and Assemblymembers Joseph A. Lagana, Marlene Caride, John F. McKeon, Vincent Mazzeo, and Raj Mukherji.

Governor Christie and his Administration are committed to confronting the issue of drug abuse and addiction in the Garden State through measures that include:

a statewide **Expansion of Drug Court** that places focus on treatment rather than warehousing drug addicted offenders in prison;

the bipartisan **Overdose Protection Act** and recent expansion legislation to ensure more people are making lifesaving calls in overdose situations and that first responders are also protected;

expansion of a statewide program to train and equip first responders in the administration of **Narcan** to save lives and reduce the number of heroin-related deaths;

implementation of **one-stop access** to help ex-offenders battling drug addiction using the principle of Integrated Reintegration, which will provide streamlined services available to ensure ex-offenders receive the kind of support they need to reclaim their lives and eventually move off government services and into the workplace.

Additional information about the NJPMP can be found at www.njconsumeraffairs.gov/pmp.

Press Contact:

Brian Murray
Nicole Sizemore
609-777-2600



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Office of the Governor
PO Box 001
Trenton, NJ 08625
609-292-6000