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Governor Christie's Commitment To Enhancing New Jersey's Prescription Monitoring Program

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New Jersey Continues To Be A National Leader In The Fight Against Addiction

Today, Governor Christie announced that five additional states – Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Maine, and West Virginia – are now sharing information with the New Jersey Prescription Monitoring Program (NJMPMP). This announcement has increased the number of states exchanging data with New Jersey to 12, further helping the efforts to combat the addiction crisis.

In addition to connecting with the five states, the Governor, along with the Division of Consumer Affairs, announced important enhancements to the programs capabilities:

- Expanding patient history searches to help ensure people are treated before it is too late. Physicians can now analyze two years of a patient's prescription records, a year more than previously allowed, providing a more comprehensive picture of that patient's controlled substance history. This gives physicians a better chance of identifying people at risk of prescription abuse, addiction or overdose, and it allows them to connect at-risk or addicted patients with appropriate treatment services.
- Converting opioid dosage measurements into a standard value to help prevent overdoses and over prescribing. The NJMPMP now automatically converts dosages of commonly-prescribed opioids of differing potency, such as codeine, fentanyl, and oxycodone, into a standard value known as "morphine milligram equivalents" (MME). This conversion allows prescribers to compare the total potency of different opioid medications a patient is consuming with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines and to instantly identify patients who may need closer monitoring, tapering or other measures to reduce risks. Under CDC guidelines, embraced by the NJ State Board of Medical Examiners, prescribers should use extra precautions when increasing patients to 50 MME per day and avoid or carefully justify increasing a dosage to 90 MME per day.

The Governor's Commitment To Preventing Addiction Before It Starts Has Been A Top Priority Since The Earliest Days Of His Administration

New Jersey established the New Jersey Prescription Monitoring Program (NJMPMP) database in September 2011. To date, the NJMPMP contains more than **72.9 million** records of prescription drug prescribing and dispensing, including prescriptions for Human Growth Hormone (HGH). The NJMPMP is available to all licensed healthcare practitioners who are authorized by the State of New Jersey to prescribe or dispense CDS medications. Since the PMP's inception in 2011, more than 8.9 million requests were conducted by New Jersey users.

Expansion of Prescription Monitoring Program (NJMPMP) to Include Interstate Data-Sharing: New Jersey's PMP is successfully collaborating with the following 12 states:

- South Carolina
- Minnesota
- Rhode Island
- Virginia
- Connecticut
- Delaware
- New York
- Pennsylvania
- Massachusetts
- New Hampshire
- Maine
- West Virginia

The program was last expanded in April 2016 when Governor Christie announced that New York and New Jersey were combining forces to enhance Prescription Monitoring Programs, furthering the national fight against heroin and opioid addiction by allowing participating states to share records on the sale of prescriptions for Controlled Dangerous Substances (CDS).

- NJPMP data shows that prescribers in New Jersey are successfully making use of the ability to view cross-border prescription data. In 2016, the interstate hub enabled **1,015,897 prescriber data requests** between New Jersey and our interstate partners, **a 512 percent increase** from 2015.
- During the first five months of 2017, the interstate hub enabled a total of **824,138 prescriber data requests** between New Jersey and our interstate partners, **a 274 percent increase** from the same period in 2016.

Launched the First-In-The-Nation Mobile App: In April 2015, New Jersey launched the first-in-the-nation mobile app that allows authorized practitioners to conduct NJPMP searches on smartphones and other mobile devices, enabling them to bring this tool directly into their everyday patient care.

Signed Legislation Implementing Statewide Law Enforcement Efforts Against Opioid Abuse: These coordination activities include the Division of Consumer Affairs and professional licensing boards in identifying, investigating, and prosecuting the illegal sources and distribution of prescription opioid drugs; taking appropriate steps to enhance the oversight by professional licensing boards; and providing training to law enforcement officials, physicians, and pharmacists.

Project Medicine Drop: In New Jersey, the Project Medicine Drop program has been an important component of efforts to halt the abuse and diversion of prescription drugs by providing consumers with an opportunity to discard unused prescription medications every day throughout the year at participating law enforcement agencies. Having drop-off points at police departments, sheriff's offices, State Police stations, military installations, and college public safety agencies across New Jersey allows citizens to safely dispose of their unused, excess or expired prescription medications before they fall into the wrong hands.

- Since its launch in 2011, Project Medicine Drop (PMD) has resulted in the collection of 157,162 pounds – or just over 78 tons - of unused medications. For 2016 alone, 68,200 pounds of prescription drugs were dropped off at collection locations throughout the state. And, in just the first quarter of 2017, more than 19,300 pounds have been collected.
- To date, 227 stationary drop boxes and 160 mobile drop boxes have been issued statewide.

Expansion of the Project Medicine Drop: In April 2015, Governor Christie signed legislation advancing the continuation of the Department of Law & Public Safety's (L&PS) Project Medicine Drop. In addition, the legislation provided for future expansion of the program at the funding discretion of the Department. It also required L&PS to post on its website a list of all secure prescription medicine drop-off locations, including receptacles maintained by the Division of Consumer Affairs, as well as any receptacle located in New Jersey that is approved by the federal Drug Enforcement Administration.

Walgreens Collaboration: In December 2016, Governor Christie visited the Walgreen's pharmacy in East Brunswick to announce a collaboration with Walgreen's for their Safe Medication Disposal Program. Their efforts are the first of their kind by a nationwide retailer to provide a safe and convenient way to dispose of unwanted, unused or expired prescriptions, including controlled dangerous substances (CDS), and over-the-counter medications at no cost. A list of all safe medication disposal box locations can be found [here](#).

Prevention of "Doctor Shopping:" In July 2015, Governor Christie signed legislation that broadens the use of the NJPMP by doctors and pharmacists, and implements new methods for preventing "doctor shopping" that occurs with prescription and opioid abuse.

- Expanding New Jersey healthcare professionals' access to the NJPMP by, among other things, requiring that prescribers and pharmacists register for NJPMP access, and requiring that physicians consult the NJPMP under limited circumstances
- Requiring pharmacists to submit identifying information for any individual who picks up a prescription for a patient, and pharmacies to submit information to the NJPMP every seven days, rather than every 30 days as previously required.
- Requiring the Attorney General's Office to continue its current practice of automatically registering prescribers and pharmacists for NJPMP access when granting or renewing the practitioners' State registration to prescribe or dispense CDS.

In April 2015, Governor Christie signed legislation that strengthens the Attorney General's ability to coordinate statewide law enforcement efforts against opioid abuse in the Garden State. These coordination activities include the Division of Consumer Affairs and professional licensing boards in identifying, investigating, and prosecuting the illegal sources and distribution of prescription opioid drugs; taking appropriate steps to enhance the oversight by professional licensing boards; and providing training to law enforcement officials, physicians, and pharmacists.

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