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Governor Christie Announces Major Expansion of NJ's Life-Saving Prescription Monitoring Program

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5 States Join System With New Enhancements To Ensure People Are Treated, Prevent Overdoses & Over Prescribing

Trenton, NJ – Governor Chris Christie announced today that Pennsylvania and four other states have joined the New Jersey Prescription Monitoring Program (NJMPMP), a national model for life-saving drug addiction prevention and treatment.

Governor Christie launched the NJMPMP in 2011 to create a centralized data sharing system for healthcare providers and pharmacists in partner states to track prescription sales of narcotic painkillers, opioids, and other drugs that often lead to deadly heroin addictions. Prescribers in 12 states now use the NJMPMP to prevent and treat drug addiction, misuse and multistate “doctor shopping”—a common way substance abusers feed their habits and offenders sell on the streets to vulnerable people.

“The NJMPMP is perhaps the most immediate and direct way my administration is bringing America together to fight the deadliest health crisis of our time,” Governor Christie said. “Today, we welcome five more states to this proven life-saving network, stemming the tide of addiction drowning our families, friends, neighbors and coworkers of all demographics. We will keep growing the NJMPMP, as bipartisan leaders of more states recognize it is an invaluable solution to protect people from the disease of addiction and to connect tens of millions of people with immediate treatment, including those who otherwise would have been lost under the radar.”

In addition to the Keystone State, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Maine and West Virginia recently enrolled in the NJMPMP. These five states join New York, Connecticut, Delaware, South Carolina, Rhode Island, Virginia, and Minnesota. To date, the NJMPMP contains detailed information on nearly 73 million prescriptions written or filled in New Jersey for opioids or other controlled dangerous substances (CDS).

“With every new partner we add to the NJMPMP, we’re building a broader, stronger network more capable of combatting prescription drug abuse and diversion,” said Attorney General Christopher S. Porrino. “Prescribers and pharmacists in our new partner states have joined thousands of professionals nationwide who are reaching beyond geographical boundaries to present an allied front against the scourge of addiction.”

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. Each record in the NJMPMP contains the names of the patient, doctor, and pharmacy; drug dispensing date, type, days' supply, and quantity of medication; and method of payment.

In addition to connecting five additional states to the NJMPMP, Governor Christie’s administration has enhanced the system’s capabilities by:

- 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 NJPMP 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.

"By expanding the search capabilities of the NJPMP and adding the Active Daily MME calculation, we've given prescribers and pharmacists additional tools to help reduce the risk that patients will become addicted to prescription drugs or suffer an overdose," said Director Steve Lee of the Division of Consumer Affairs. "These enhancements to the data-sharing system, coupled with the addition of five new partner states, strengthens the NJPMP's role as a vital tool in fighting addiction."

Access to the NJPMP is granted to prescribers, delegates and pharmacists who are licensed by the State of New Jersey and whose licensees are in good standing with their respective licensing boards. Registered prescribers may delegate their authority to access the NJPMP to certain other healthcare professionals. All persons authorized to have online access to PMP information must register with the Division.

Patient information in the NJPMP is intended to supplement an evaluation of a patient, confirm a patient's drug history, or document compliance with a therapeutic regimen. Before accessing NJPMP data, users must certify that they are seeking information for a specific, current patient. When prescribers, their delegates, or pharmacists identify a patient as potentially having an issue of concern regarding drug use, they are encouraged to help the patient locate assistance and take any other action the prescriber or pharmacist deems appropriate.

The NJPMP also is a valuable tool for law enforcement and regulatory investigations into the unlawful diversion of prescription narcotics. This database has been used to identify and successfully prosecute healthcare professionals associated with "pill mills" that dispense narcotics without a legitimate medical purpose.

Visit ReachNJ.gov, for immediate access to drug addiction prevention, treatment, recovery and reentry services. Click [here](#) for general information about the NJPMP and [here](#) for guidance on safer pain medication prescribing practices.

Patients who believe that a licensed health care professional is prescribing CDS inappropriately can file an online complaint with the State Division of Consumer Affairs by visiting its [website](#) or calling **1-800-242-5846** (toll free within New Jersey) or **973-504- 6200**.

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