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Gov. Christie: The President And Congress Have The Tools, Working With States, To Lessen This Opioid Crisis

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Gov. Christie: POTUS And Congress Have The Tools, Working Wit...


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Transcript:

Jake Tapper: We're back with more on our politics lead. Late today, the Trump administration announced it will immediately begin reviewing an interim report on the opioid crisis in this country prepared by a White House anti-drug commission which is led by New Jersey Governor Chris Christie. His state New Jersey has been hit hard by the heroin epidemic. Earlier today, I asked the governor about the findings and what more needs to be done about this crisis.

Governor Christie: What we found, Jake, is 142 Americans are dying every day of drug overdose. Every day, which means we have a 9/11 scale loss every three weeks in America. So the first recommendation we said to the president is you must declare a national emergency, a public health emergency that will empower your cabinet and the executive branch and motivate the congressional folks to be able to fund this and to get on top of it because we have a crisis. Think about that, Jake, every three weeks.

Jake Tapper: That's staggering.

Governor Christie: The number of people who die are the number of people who died on 9/11.

Jake Tapper: Mostly from opioids?

Governor Christie: Mostly, three-quarters from opioids.

Jake Tapper: And is the pattern that they have some sort of health problem, they get opioids and then they can't afford to stay on it or the doctors won't continue prescribing and so they turn to heroin. Is that?

Governor Christie: Four out of every five new heroin addicts in the country today started on prescription opioids. So this problem, Jake, is not happening, it's not starting on our street corners. It's starting in doctor's offices and hospitals. We prescribe enough opioids in this country in 2015 to have every adult in America fully medicated for three weeks. It's, it's out of control. And so one of the recommendations we're making is increased education for our doctors at medical schools and dental schools and mandatory continuing medical education if you want the DEA license to write these prescriptions. We don't have that now. We need to have that across the country.

Jake Tapper: The big pharmaceutical firms need to be penalized if they're pushing these too much? Do doctors who overprescribe need to be punished?

Governor Christie: Well, doctors who overprescribed will definitely need to be punished. And the pharmaceutical companies as you probably know, there's lawsuits going on around the country right now regarding this and I don't want to say too much because New Jersey is a party to one of those lawsuits. But I would just say that there's a lot of responsibility to go around here. But the good news is that we think the President and Congress have tools available to them in working with the states to be able to lessen this crisis significantly. But we have a long way to go. We have a number of recommendations that we'll announce later today with the president and we hope that the president declares a public health emergency in this country which will allow us to be very, very aggressive about this problem.

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