



Editorial

Prescription database a new tool in drug fight

By John Gadea, Director, Drug Control Division, Connecticut Department of Consumer Protection

Prescription drug abuse: A real and growing threat.

In 2007, more than five million Americans reported non-medical use of prescription drugs, according to the National Survey on Drug Use and Health. That's more than the number people who use cocaine, heroin, hallucinogens, and inhalants **combined**. Prescription drug misuse, diversion and abuse cut across all sectors of our community, from young teens to adults to our elderly.

Because prescription drug abuse is an increasing problem that endangers public health and safety, the Connecticut Department of Consumer Protection Prescription Monitoring Program (PMP) has partnered with healthcare practitioners across the state to develop the Connecticut Prescription Monitoring and Report System (CPMRS).

CPMRS allows prescribers and pharmacists to electronically share valuable patient information in a matter of minutes.

"As we are reminded, sadly and much too often, abusing drugs – whether they are street drugs or prescription – destroys lives, careers and families. It takes a costly toll on society," Connecticut **Governor M. Jodi Rell** noted when the program was introduced. "This monitoring system can flag abuse more quickly and help doctors and pharmacists provide better care to their patients."

CPMRS: Better data, better care.

With CPMRS, Connecticut prescribers and pharmacists can help identify patterns of potential misuse, diversion and abuse, while providing better patient care.

Since July 2008, the state Department of Consumer Protection Prescription Monitoring Program has been gathering controlled substance prescription information from pharmacies through a database accessible to prescribers and pharmacists. It requires all Connecticut licensed pharmacies to upload their prescription information twice a month. "Our goal is to have every licensed prescriber and pharmacist in Connecticut using the system within the next couple of years."

CPMRS is a web-based application that allows prescribers and pharmacists to access their patient controlled substance (Schedule II – V) prescription history information online 24/7. This centralized system was designed as a tool for prescribers and pharmacists to provide better data for better care to their patients and to reduce addiction and overdose.

CPMRS benefits:

- A patient's controlled substance (Schedule II – V) prescription information is immediately available online 24/7.
- Prescribers can have more accurate information on all controlled substance drugs a patient is taking.
- Prescribers can check their own controlled substance prescribing history.
- Prescribers and pharmacists can quickly post an alert to notify other users of a particular situation or patient.
- Reports can provide warnings of the misuse, diversion or abuse of prescription drugs.
- Prescribers and pharmacists can work together to provide better patient care and prevent drug misuse, diversion and abuse.

Also, the Prescription Monitoring Program is working with malpractice insurance companies to reduce rates for any prescriber that uses the CPMRS.

Connecticut Prescription Monitoring & Reporting System (CPMRS)

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CPMRS: How does it work?

Using the CPMRS data collection website at www.ctrxreport.com, pharmacies that dispense Schedule II-V controlled substance drugs are required to submit their prescription data to Optimum Technology, Inc., a private contractor that collects the data and manages all technical aspects of the system.

All transactions are uploaded to the CPMRS as required by Connecticut General Statute: Section 21a-254.

Pharmacies are encouraged to report prior to the deadline in order to have time to correct any rejected submissions. They may also report more frequently if they prefer. With CPMRS, pharmacists are able to review their controlled substance prescription information online 24/7 to check for patterns of misuse, diversion or abuse.

For technical assistance, please call the CPMRS Administrator at (860) 713-6073 or e-mail DCP.Prescriptions@ct.gov.

HIPAA applicability

A covered entity such as a prescriber or pharmacy may disclose protected health information for certain public health activities and purposes. In addition, disclosure may be made to a health oversight agency for oversight activities authorized by law. These two exceptions allow for the disclosure of information to and from the Prescription Monitoring Program.

Registering for a free CPMRS account:

Beginning March 1, 2010, the Prescription Monitoring Program will be requiring all new registrants to have their registration forms notarized as part of the registration process.

Visit the CPMRS website at www.ctpmp.com and click on "Not a User? Register to become a User." This will initiate an automated registration process.

For questions regarding registration, please contact the CPMRS administrator at (860) 713-6073.

