



## Governor's Cabinet Opiate Action Team *Attacking Ohio's Opiate Epidemic*

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Ohio is in the midst of a public health epidemic due to the dramatic increase in availability of opiate-based prescription painkiller medications and the abuse of these drugs for nonmedical purposes. A dramatic increase in prescribing over the past decade has brought these dangerous medications into the homes of the majority of Ohioans, averaging 67 pills for every man, woman, and child in the state. As a result, addiction to prescription pain medications and their chemical lookalike, heroin, is on the rise. Drug overdoses are also at an all-time high, averaging four deaths a day in Ohio with nearly 45 percent of them attributable to prescription drugs.

Under Governor John R. Kasich's leadership, the Governor's Cabinet Opiate Action Team (GCOAT) was established to address the continuing epidemic of misuse and abuse and overdose from prescription opioids. The GCOAT consists of five working groups: (1) Treatment--includes Medication Assisted Treatment; (2) Professional Education; (3) Public Education; (4) Enforcement; and (5) Recovery Supports. A number of state department directors lead these committees, and state department staff and representatives from various stakeholder organizations participate.

This collaborative approach toward reversing the trend of opiate abuse is producing results, but much more work remains.

### **Producing Results and Making Progress**

#### **Ohio General Assembly**

- House Bill 93: Sponsored by Rep. Terry Johnson and Sen. David Burke – a doctor and a pharmacist respectively – this legislation was signed into law by Gov. Kasich in May 2011. Its passage placed limits on prescribers' ability to furnish certain drugs, strengthened licensing of and law enforcement involving pain-management clinics, and developed a statewide prescription-drug "take-back" program.

#### **State Agencies and Boards**

##### **Ohio Bureau of Workers Compensation**

- Targeting fraud involving opiate abuse, including taking action against pill mill doctor James Lundeen, who lost his license following a BWC investigation
- Centralized the drug utilization review process, helping to identify injured workers who may be on dangerous combinations or doses of prescription drugs with the goal of ensuring the right medicines for the right condition at the right time
- Its first-ever formulary and coordinated services, or pharmacy "lock-in" program are helping BWC better manage prescriptions and prevent pharmacy shopping for dangerous opiates

##### **Ohio Department of Alcohol & Drug Addiction Services**

- The creation of more than 22 new groups of the support and family engagement model called SOLACE is underway
- ODADAS is working to open a new Opiate Treatment Program in southern Ohio
- Don't Get Me Started—an opiate abuse prevention and education campaign—was launched January 2012
- 24 new Opiate Task Forces have been created to focus on prevention, treatment, and law enforcement efforts



## **Ohio Department of Health**

- Funding four additional community-based prescription drug abuse prevention coalitions in 2011-2012 as part of a prevention campaign called "Prescription for Prevention"
- Providing technical assistance and funding for Ohio's first Naloxone overdose reversal program, "Project D.A.W.N" (Deaths Avoided With Naloxone) in Scioto County
- Funding two comprehensive overdose prevention projects in Montgomery and Scioto counties that focus on coalition and policy development, education of providers, conducting poison death reviews, implementation of education/awareness campaigns, education of prescribers and registration with the Ohio Automated Rx Reporting System (OARRS)
- Developed, under the leadership of Directors Dr. Ted Wymyslo (Health) and Bonnie Kantor-Burman (Aging), the Emergency Department/Acute Care Facilities prescribing guidelines as well as research into other prescribing policies

## **Ohio Department of Public Safety / Ohio Highway Patrol**

- Comparing January-March 2012 to January-March 2011:
  - 60 percent increase in heroin seizures
  - 41 percent increase in prescription narcotics seizures
  - 27 percent increase in drug arrests—current total is 2,613 drug arrests
  - 9 percent increase in OVI arrests—current total is 8,145 OVI arrests

## **State Medical Board of Ohio**

- Inappropriate prescribing/pill mill issues account for 20 percent of the 136 actions taken against physicians in 2011 – 12 followed the passage of House Bill 93
- 40 percent of the inappropriate prescribing/pill mill sanctions suspended the physician's license to practice
- Revoked the medical license of Dr. James Lundeen for inappropriate prescribing
- Published FAQs for new rules related to prescribing of narcotics and use of Ohio Automated Rx Reporting System (OARRS)

## **State Pharmacy Board of Ohio**

- Through 2010-2011, Pharmacy Board agents were assigned a total of 115 cases for questionable prescribing and trafficking in drugs
- 96 investigations were carried out and a total of 82 suspects were identified and prosecuted criminally

## **Office of the Attorney General**

- In 2011, the Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation seized more than 53,000 prescription pills valued at about \$1.4 million
- Three special prosecutors have been assigned to specifically focus on prescription drug diversion throughout Ohio
- The Ohio Peace Officer Training Academy has trained more than 1,000 law enforcement officers on the scope of the prescription drug problem
- Awarded over \$3.6 million to law enforcement agencies through the 2011-2012 Drug Use Prevention Grant to fund D.A.R.E. and other in-school drug use prevention programs in Ohio

