



## Division of Behavioral Health Opioid Update for Wednesday, September 6, 2017

The Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) offers the Opioid Update to share information about opioid use and Iowa's efforts to address the national opioid epidemic. Please feel free to submit topics to Julie Jones at [julie.jones@idph.iowa.gov](mailto:julie.jones@idph.iowa.gov).

### **In this issue:**

- **Department Efforts**
- **Opioid News**

### **Department Efforts**

#### **New Prescription Monitoring Program (PMP) Infographic**

The Iowa Board of Pharmacy, Iowa Department of Public Health, and Iowa Pharmacy Association have worked together to create an Iowa Prescription Monitoring Program (PMP) infographic to help healthcare providers understand the importance of registering for the PMP. Nationally, use of a PMP has proven to be one of the most effective ways to reduce opioid overprescribing. The infographic is easy to read, includes important facts, and is available for anyone who would like to distribute it to healthcare providers. The document is available in an [electronic](#) version suitable for use as an attachment, and in a [print-ready](#) version.

For more information on the PMP infographic or to order copies for distribution, contact Janet Nelson at [Janet.Nelson@IDPH.iowa.gov](mailto:Janet.Nelson@IDPH.iowa.gov).

### **Opioid News**

#### **America's Opioid Epidemic and its Effect on the Nation's Commercially-Insured Population\***

Recently, Blue Cross and Blue Shield (BCBS) released a report on opioid use by commercially insured members. In the report, they identified that 21 percent of BCBS members filled at least one opioid prescription in 2015. Data also suggest that the number of BCBS members with an opioid use disorder spiked 493 percent over a seven-year period. Other key findings include:

- Patients who fill high-dosage opioid prescriptions have much higher rates of opioid use disorder than patients who fill low-dose prescriptions across both short and long duration regimens.
- Women age 45 and older have higher rates of opioid use disorder than men. Males younger than 45 have higher rates of opioid use disorder than females. Females fill more opioid prescriptions than males across all age groups.
- Long-duration prescription opioid use and opioid use disorder align geographically, with the highest rates in the South and the Appalachian Region.

- The 65 percent rate of increase in the use of medication assisted treatments does not match the 493 percent rate of increase in opioid use disorder diagnoses from 2010 through 2016. States that have experienced the greatest growth in the use of medication-assisted treatments are not necessarily the areas most impacted by opioid use disorders. Higher rates of treatment relative to opioid use disorder occur in New England and lower rates occur in the South and parts of the Midwest.
- While opioids are more likely to be prescribed for select acute short term conditions, prescriptions for chronic conditions are twice as likely to extend past 45 days and are three times as likely to reach a “high dose” level which leads to higher levels of opioid use disorder.

\*To see the full report, click on the following link: [Blue Cross/Blue Shield Report](#).

### **State Health Officials, Medical Experts, and Safety Advocates Call on FDA to Seek Removal of Ultra-High Dosage Opioids\***

The Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO), Physicians for Responsible Opioid Prescribing (PROP) the National Safety Council (NSC) and the American College of Medical Toxicology (ACMT) filed a petition on September 1, 2017, requesting that the FDA seek removal of ultra-high dosage opioids from the market. According to their petition, the risks of these products outweigh their benefits. An example of an ultra-high dosage opioid is the OxyContin 80mg tablet, which is equivalent to 24 regular strength Vicodin in one pill.

The request for FDA to seek removal of these products comes on the heels of a report released last month by the prestigious National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) calling on FDA to overhaul its opioid policies using a new framework that factors in misuse. Dr. Scott Gottlieb, the recently appointed FDA Commissioner, enthusiastically endorsed the NASEM report and the new framework for making opioid approval and removal decisions.

\*To read the entire request, click on the following link: [ASTHO Request](#).