

PRESCRIPTION DRUG OVERDOSE PREVENTION *in* **FLORIDA**



THE STATE RESPONSE:

- ▶ The 2009 Florida legislature established Florida's Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP), requiring (1) all state-licensed pharmacies to report the dispensing of controlled substances within seven days of dispensing and (2) all pain management clinics to register with the state. Subsequent legislation passed in 2010 mandated physician-ownership of pain management clinics and increased regulatory oversight.
- ▶ Legislation passed in 2011 directed the state surgeon general to declare prescription drug abuse a public health emergency in Florida, increased regulatory oversight of drug wholesalers, mandated reporting of drug distribution data, prohibited physicians from dispensing Class II and Class III controlled substances (except in very limited circumstances), and required all Florida pharmacies to re-register with the state and undergo background screening to be allowed to dispense controlled substances. The new law came with increased administrative and criminal penalties for violations.
- ▶ The state surgeon general signed a declaration of public health emergency on July 1, 2011. The declaration required dispensing practitioners to dispose of existing inventory of controlled substances and to comply fully with all new regulatory requirements.
- ▶ The 2012 Florida legislature created the Statewide Task Force on Prescription Drug Abuse & Newborns to examine prescription drug abuse among expectant mothers, costs associated with neonatal abstinence syndrome (including adverse health outcomes and the cost of care), and possible prevention strategies. The task force is chaired by the state attorney general, and both the state surgeon general and state health officer are members. Among its many activities so far, the task force launched the Born Drug-Free Florida prevention campaign, an initiative to raise awareness about babies being born exposed to prescription drugs. The campaign educates expectant mothers about the importance of discussing prescription drug abuse with their doctors and to offer assistance to the women. The Task Force also began developing drug addiction curricula for Florida nursing and medical schools and recommended a prosecution immunity provision in Florida law for pregnant women seeking substance abuse treatment.

SUCCESSES:

- ▶ Oxycodone-related deaths in Florida plunged by almost 41% in 2012, and overall drug-related deaths fell by 10%. At the same time, the PDMP documented a 51% decrease in the number of individuals receiving prescriptions from five or more prescribers and five or more pharmacies in a 90-day period.
- ▶ In the first ten months of 2013, Florida physicians purchased just 257,028 units of oxycodone, down from more than 35 million dosage units in 2010.
- ▶ Fewer than 1.4 million oxycodone prescriptions were written in Florida in fiscal year 2012–2013, compared with more than 1.8 million in the preceding fiscal year.
- ▶ The number of registered pain management clinics in Florida has dropped dramatically—from 921 in FY 2009–10 to 372 in 2014. This significant change reflects the closure of numerous “pill mills” after increased regulation and enhanced law enforcement efforts.

THE PROBLEM:

- ▶ **There were upwards of 170,000 deaths in Florida in 2009, and about 2400 of these were drug overdose deaths**
- ▶ **In the first five months of 2010, Florida dispensing prescribers purchased more than 35 million dosage units of oxycodone. That same year, the US Drug Enforcement Agency reported that 92 of the nation's top 100 oxycodone purchasers were Florida physicians.**
- ▶ **In 2003, the number of drug overdose deaths in Florida was 1,804. This number increased 61% by 2009, reaching 2,905, with a significant portion of deaths attributed to the opioid pain reliever oxycodone.**

“What we've learned is that there was no ‘silver bullet’ to address Florida's prescription drug crisis. We couldn't just regulate our way out of it. It required a multi-pronged approach and collaboration among many partners at the federal, state and local levels.”

**— Lucy Gee, MS, Director,
Florida Division of Medical Quality Assurance**