



ISSUE

Reducing the harm of opioid use

MMA Position

To reduce the harm of opioid use, the MMA supports: dedicated funding (HF400, SF751) from pharmaceutical manufacturers and wholesale drug distributors to 1) embed the Prescription Monitoring Program (PMP) into electronic health records (EHRs); 2) support patient and prescriber education programs; and 3) expand addiction treatment programs.

Background

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), opioids are involved in more than three out of five drug overdose deaths. Overdose deaths from opioids, including prescription opioids and heroin, have increased by more than five times since 1999. Overdoses involving opioids killed more than 42,000 people in 2016, and 40 percent of those deaths were from prescription opioids.

One of the reasons for the crisis is the years of misinformation from opioid manufacturers who claimed these drugs were not addictive even after evidence to the contrary came out.

Here in Minnesota, the number of opioid prescriptions is decreasing. However, opioid overdose deaths (due to prescription opioids, heroin, fentanyl, and fentanyl analogs) continue to rise. Prescription opioids still account for the greatest number of overdose deaths in Minnesota. Since 2010, Minnesota has seen an increase in heroin-involved deaths, and between 2015 and 2016, a rise in fentanyl-involved deaths was seen.

According to recent CDC data, an increase in overdose deaths, combined with an increase in suicide deaths, has led to a decline in U.S. life expectancy over the past few years.

Talking Points

- By integrating the PMP with EHRs, physicians will be able to access patient data within their clinical workflow and be better equipped to fight prescription opioid abuse and diversion.
- Education on pain, opioids and addiction will empower physicians to make appropriate, well-informed decisions about whether to initiate, continue, modify, or discontinue opioid therapy for each individual patient. The MMA is promoting this type of education to reduce overprescribing and ensure that patients in need have access to opioids.
- Providing patients with education on pain, opioids and addiction will allow them to make informed decisions about their treatment options, as well as understand the benefits and risks of opioid therapy.
- Addiction treatment is a critical piece of the puzzle in the opioid epidemic. We must ensure access to treatments for opioid use disorder and ensure that we have the appropriate level of resources available to treat those suffering from opioid use disorder.

- 1 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Overview of the Drug Overdose Epidemic: Behind the Numbers*. Accessed December 14, 2018 from <https://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/data/index.html>
- 2 National Institute on Drug Abuse. *Overdose Death Rates*. Accessed December 14, 2018 from <https://www.drugabuse.gov/related-topics/trends-statistics/overdose-death-rates>.
- 3 Minnesota Department of Health. *Opioid Dashboard*. Accessed December 14, 2018 from <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/health-improvement/opioid-dashboard/>
- 4 <https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2018/s1129-US-life-expectancy.html> ; <https://www.aafp.org/news/health-of-the-public/20181210li-feexpectdrop.html>