



2018 AG REQUEST LEGISLATION MANDATORY USE OF THE PRESCRIPTION MONITORING PROGRAM

PROBLEM

Opioid misuse and addiction impose substantial economic and social costs on communities and families in Washington. Each day this epidemic kills about two people in our state.

One way that people obtain increasing amounts of opioids to feed their own addiction or to sell for profit is by visiting multiple providers, known as “doctor shopping.” Other people with legitimate medical needs may receive too many opioids or dangerous combinations of medications simply because their practitioners are not aware of what other providers are prescribing.

BACKGROUND

Prescription Monitoring Programs (PMP) can identify patterns of misuse and overprescribing. In operation since 2011, Washington’s PMP collects electronic records when prescriptions for controlled substances are dispensed to patients and makes this information available to medical and dental practitioners to inform their decisions. However, **only about 30 percent of Washington practitioners who prescribe controlled substances have registered to use the PMP.** Despite improvements that have made the PMP more convenient to use—including the ability to access the data through one of the most commonly used electronic health record systems and delegate access to other licensed health care providers—the vast majority of practitioners are issuing prescriptions for highly addictive substances without verifying whether patients are also obtaining prescriptions from other practitioners.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention states that practitioners should review PMP data before prescribing opioids. Accordingly, **31 states** require prescribers to check their state’s PMP before prescribing opioids and other controlled substances. These requirements have led to dramatic decreases in “doctor shopping”—at least 50 percent and 90 percent in Kentucky and New York, respectively — and have not impacted access to opioids for those with legitimate medical needs.

LEGISLATION (SB 6028 / HB 2325)

Because the PMP is only effective as a tool to protect patients and expose potential misuse when practitioners use it, this legislation establishes a duty for practitioners to review patients’ PMP information before prescribing certain controlled substances, including opioids. The ultimate decision as to whether or not to issue a prescription remains with the practitioner. The PMP simply provides additional information about patients’ controlled substance histories to inform practitioners’ decisions. It also gives practitioners an opportunity to refer patients who are suffering from addiction to treatment.



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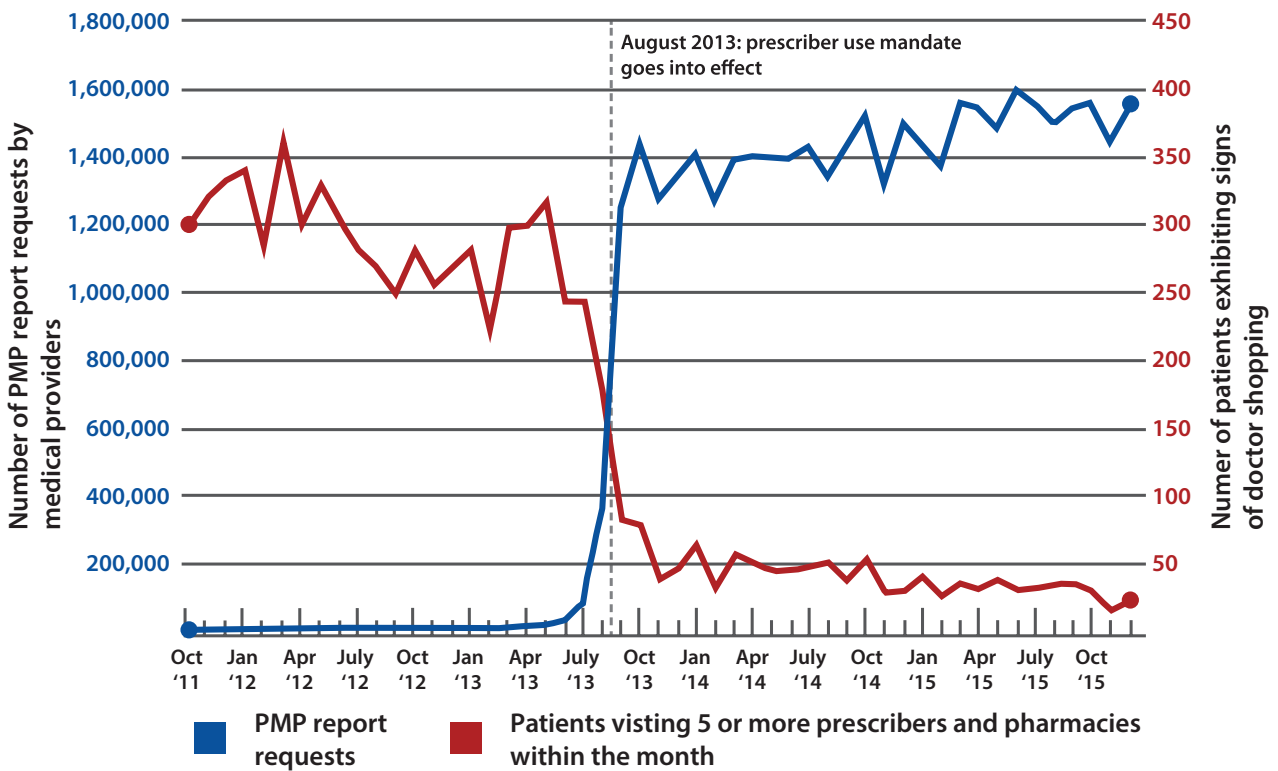
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PMP Mandate Results in 90% Decrease in Doctor Shopping in New York



SOURCE: THE PEW CHARITABLE TRUSTS

Many States Require Practitioners to Check the PMP

