

White Paper

Prescription Drug/Controlled Substance Abuse & Misuse

Date: August 16, 2011

To: Governor Matthew H. Mead

From: Governor's Substance Abuse and Violent Crime Advisory Board (GSAVCAB)
Substance Abuse Sub-Committee

Honorable Governor Mead, your GSAVCAB committee recognizes that Prescription drug abuse is the Nation's and Wyoming's fastest-growing drug problem. The April 2011, Office of National Drug Control Policy publication **Epidemic: Responding to America's Prescription Drug Abuse Crisis**, Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention Plan includes action in four major areas to reduce prescription drug abuse: Education, Monitoring, Proper Medication Disposal, and Enforcement. The GSAVCAB is in agreement that these four areas are critical to effectively combat Prescription drug abuse and misuse within Wyoming. It should be noted that the GSAVCAB is collaborating with and has partnered with the Prescription Abuse Stakeholders (RAS), a group of cross-disciplined professionals that are organized by the US Attorney's Office. In addition, the GSAVCAB, Substance Abuse Sub-Committee also collaborates with the Board of Medicine (BOM), Board of Nursing (BON), Board of Pharmacy (BOP), Wyoming Medical Society (WMS), University of Wyoming Survey and Analysis Center (SAC), Dental Association, Mental Health and Substance Abuse Division (MHSAD), and the Wyoming Association of Sheriffs and Chiefs of Police (WASCOP).

The GSAVCAB focus is only on the abuse and misuse of Prescription Controlled Substances. Legitimate medical use Prescription Controlled Substances, such as opioids, for pain management is recognized as a legal and appropriate when closely monitored.

-Education: A flyer is currently being developed to provide the general public with information and helpful tools specific to Prescription Drug Abuse. Additionally, the Wyoming DCI's IT department has volunteered to develop a Prescription Abuse Website to provide national, state and local information that can be updated when needed.

Presentations have been provided to the Wyoming Realtors Association, Drug Abuse and Resistance Education Association (DARE), and the Wyoming Medical Association, law enforcement, and various community based organizations, specific to the scope of the problem. Education and training will continue for and with the agencies mentioned above, as well as the Department of Education. Promoting education and awareness of this growing problem among prescribers is necessary so they will not engage in over-prescribing. Purdue Pharma has been providing free Prescription Drug training to Wyoming law enforcement and pharmacies for several years now. Coordination for this training continues to date.

-Tracking and Monitoring: Wyoming is one of forty three states that has an authorized Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP). The Wyoming BOP is responsible for the PDMP. The PDMP collects and tracks controlled substance prescriptions from Wyoming physicians and pharmacies. As a result, patient profiles can be provided to physicians and pharmacies upon formal request. The PDMP also assists law enforcement with this type of information for open and ongoing criminal investigations.

The SAC analyzed PDMP data of nearly 4 million prescriptions filled for 477,515 unique Wyoming persons from 2004-2009. Almost one-third of the total Wyoming population for each year filled at least one prescription for a schedule drug. The most prescribed scheduled drugs were opioid analgesics, predominantly, Oxycodone and Hydrocodone. Opioids alone accounted for more than one-half of all prescriptions in the PDMP each year. Overall, from 2005-2009, opioid analgesic prescriptions per 1,000 population statewide were up 21%, sedative/hypnotics up 37%, and anxiolytic drugs were up 33%.

Providing and sharing Tracking and Monitoring information with medical, treatment/prevention, education and law enforcement professionals is essential to portray the scope of this problem.

-Proper Medication Disposal: Research consistently portrays that the majority of prescription drug addicts initially obtained their drugs from friends and/or family member's unused medications. As a result, the proper disposal (incineration) of unused medication is essential to prevent future abuse. Flushing unused medication is an increasing environmental concern that can affect our clean water supplies. Wyoming law enforcement, in concert with DEA, has participated in two National Take Back Initiatives (NTBI), yielding the following results:

September 25, 2010:	668 pounds of Prescription and Over The Counter (OTC) medications. All of these substances were destroyed by incineration.
April 30, 2011:	769 pounds of Prescription and Over The Counter (OTC) medications. All of these substances were destroyed by incineration.

The next NTBI is scheduled for October 29, 2011. The GSAVCAB will again coordinate with Wyoming's law enforcement to obtain unused medications for destruction.

DEA also provides a daily Take Back Program to law enforcement, allowing for the receipt of prescription controlled substances. This program allows local law enforcement agencies to voluntarily receive unwanted prescription controlled substances from citizens within their community, thus reducing future abuse. The GSAVCAB continues to provide those local law enforcement agencies information to sign up for this program.

-Enforcement: Wyoming law enforcement has been informed that prescription controlled substances are as easy, and sometimes more easily obtained than marijuana. Law enforcement has seen a drastic increase for the abuse of prescription controlled substances. The DCI first saw a dramatic change in 2007 for these types of cases, with an increase of more than two fold from 2006. Both 2009 and 2010 experienced a 3.5 times increase over 2006.

Law enforcement must coordinate with the PDMP, their respective health care professionals, as well as treatment/prevention specialists. Wyoming law enforcement also works closely with the DEA Diversion unit, specifically when investigations involve physicians, pharmacists or dentists.

The GSAVCAB also provided letters of support to assist Wyoming Chemical Testing who previously made application for federal funding. This request for funding was to obtain a Liquid Chromatograph/Mass Spectrometer (LC/MS) to be used for analyzing the Urine and Blood Samples for drug impaired driving cases. Chemical testing received this award and has now obtained a LC/MS that can perform rapid and broad testing of prescription controlled substances, as well as nonprescription drugs.