



HB 1426 and SB 5248: Addressing the opioid crisis

Create Systems to Stop Prescription Drug Misuse

The U.S. is in the midst of a prescription drug addiction crisis. Approximately two million Americans are addicted to prescription painkillers. In 2014, there were more than 600 opioid overdose-related deaths in Washington State. While Washington health data shows a significant drop in deaths from prescription drugs in recent years, this has been offset by a doubling of the number of heroin deaths. There are several state policies to address this crisis that could be very powerful if enacted.

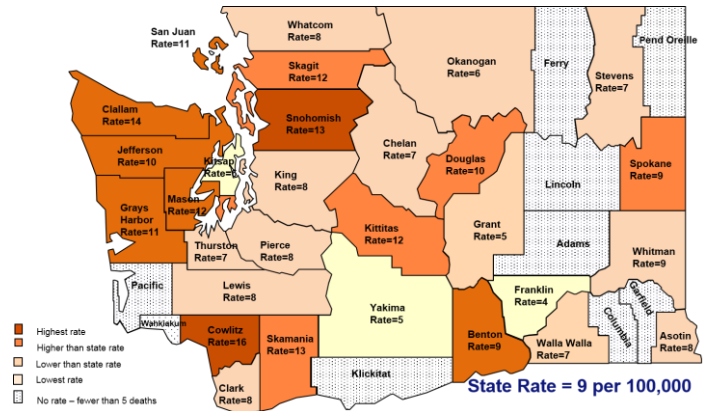
Use data to confront crisis

Washington State's Prescription Monitoring Program (PMP) has proven effective in improving patient care and curtailing prescription drug misuse. In 2016, the Washington State legislature passed House Bill 2730 which expands and streamlines access to the state PMP. This was a big step and will promote wider adoption and use of the PMP. However, continued enhancements are needed.

The Washington State Hospital Association has been working closely with the Washington State Medical Association and the Washington State Department of Health on ways to further strengthen the PMP and leverage data to promote quality improvement and appropriate opioid prescribing practices. The legislature can further address the opioid crisis by passing legislation to:

- Clarify and expand the Department's role in supporting quality improvement efforts around opioid abuse;
- Allow local Public Health Officers access to PMP data to identify persons at risk for abuse and provide appropriate follow up and care coordination services;
- Alert a patient's primary care provider and the opiate prescriber when a patient experiences an overdose event, with the goal of informing future treatment options and decreasing opioid-related deaths; and
- Provide de-identified prescribing and opioid related data to hospitals, clinics and the Washington State Hospital Association for the purpose of internal and community-wide quality improvement around opioid prescribing practices and abuse.

Opiate Overdose Death Rates by County of Residence 2012-2014



The abuse of prescription painkillers is impacting communities all across Washington State. Targeted state policies can help address this crisis.

Together, these changes will provide the health care and public health community greater resources in identifying patients at risk for abuse, stopping overdose deaths before they happen, and promoting high-quality care and evidence based opioid prescribing guidelines

Getting prescription opiates out of communities

Prescription opiates are an effective tool in treating pain, but once a patient is stabilized, we need an effective and statewide system to get unused prescription pain medications out of patients' homes and communities. This is an important step in addressing the opioid crisis given that over 70 percent of people who misuse prescription opiates obtain them from a friend or family member. WSHA supports a robust, appropriately-funded and statewide drug take-back program.

WSHA position

Health care institutions and providers need effective tools and data to address the opioid crisis. WSHA supports enhancements to our state PMP that identify those at risk for abuse and promote the sharing of information to support quality improvement and appropriate opioid prescribing practices. WSHA also supports a statewide drug take back program.