# PRESCRIPTION DRUG MONITORING PROGRAMS (PDMPs)

## Checking the PDMP: An Important Step to Improving Opioid Prescribing Practices

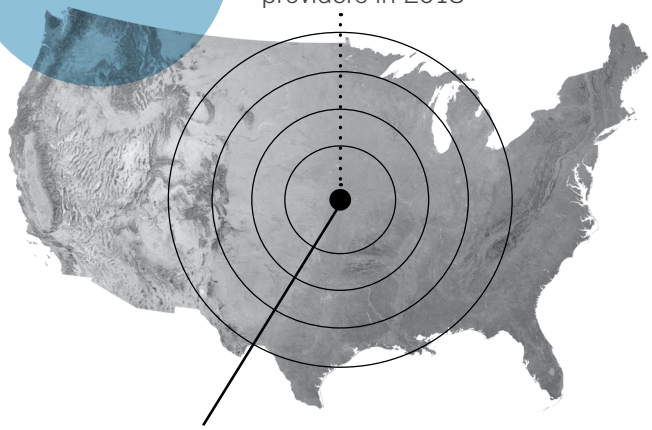
### WHAT IS A PDMP?

A PDMP is a statewide electronic database that tracks all controlled substance prescriptions. Authorized users can access prescription data such as medications dispensed and doses.

PDMPs improve patient safety by allowing clinicians to:

- Identify patients who are obtaining opioids from multiple providers.
- Calculate the total amount of opioids prescribed per day (in MME/day).
- Identify patients who are being prescribed other substances that may increase risk of opioids—such as benzodiazepines.

**249M** prescriptions for opioids were written by healthcare providers in 2013

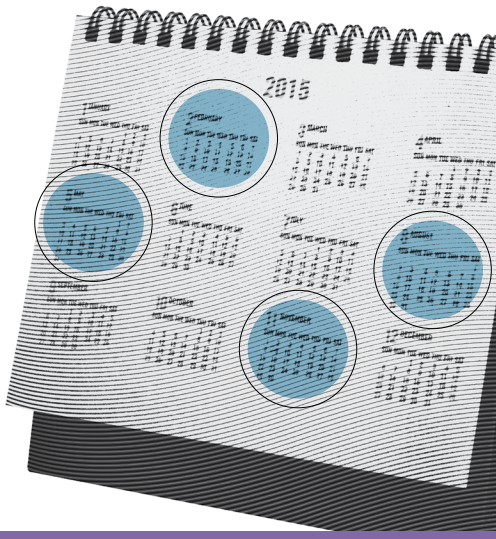


**enough prescriptions for every American adult to have a bottle of pills**

**Improving the way opioids are prescribed will ensure patients have access to safer, more effective chronic pain treatment while reducing opioid misuse, abuse, and overdose. Checking your state's PDMP is an important step in safer prescribing of these drugs.**

### WHEN SHOULD I CHECK THE PDMP?

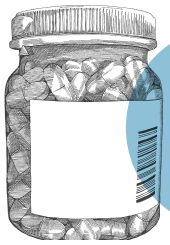
**State requirements vary, but CDC recommends checking at least once every 3 months and consider checking prior to every opioid prescription.**



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

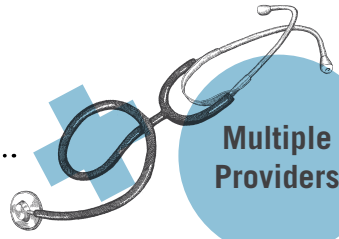
**LEARN MORE** | www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/prescribing/guideline.html

## WHAT SHOULD I CONSIDER WHEN PRESCRIBING OPIOIDS?



**High Dosage**

Talk to your patient about the risks for respiratory depression and overdose. Consider offering to taper opioids as well as prescribing naloxone for patients taking 50 MME/day or more.



**Multiple Providers**

Counsel your patient and coordinate care with their other prescribers to improve safety and discuss the need to obtain opioids from a single provider. Check the PDMP regularly and consider tapering or discontinuation of opioids if pattern continues.

**Drug Interactions**

Whenever possible, avoid prescribing opioids and benzodiazepines concurrently. Communicate with other prescribers to prioritize patient goals and weigh risks of concurrent opioid and benzodiazepine use.

## WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I FIND INFORMATION ABOUT A PATIENT IN THE PDMP THAT CONCERNS ME?

**Patients should not be dismissed from care based on PDMP information. Use the opportunity to provide potentially life-saving information and interventions.**

1. **Confirm that the information in the PDMP is correct.**
   Check for potential data entry errors, use of a nickname or maiden name, or possible identity theft to obtain prescriptions.

2. **Assess for possible misuse or abuse.**
   Offer or arrange evidence-based treatment (usually medication-assisted treatment with buprenorphine or methadone in combination with behavioral therapies) for patients who meet criteria for opioid use disorder. If you suspect diversion, urine drug testing can assist in determining whether opioids can be discontinued without causing withdrawal.

3. **Discuss any areas of concern with your patient and emphasize your interest in their safety.**

## HOW CAN I REGISTER AND USE THE PDMP IN MY STATE?

**Processes for registering and using PDMPs vary from state to state.**

**For information on your state's requirements, check The National Alliance for Model State Drug Laws online:**

**www.namsdl.org/prescription-monitoring-programs.cfm**