

STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS THE EPIDEMIC OF PRESCRIPTION DRUG ABUSE AND DIVERSION

Interim Committee on Children, Families, Health and Human Services
November 15, 2013

William S. Gallea, MD, FACEP
Medical Director, Department of Emergency Medicine, St. Peter's Hospital, Helena
Montana Medical Association, Secretary Treasurer, Member of Legislative Committee
American College of Emergency Physicians, Montana Chapter, Immediate Past President
Member, Montana Prescription Drug Registry Advisory Committee; formerly a member of
Then-Attorney General Bullock's Prescription Drug Abuse Task Force

Maintain and Improve the Montana Prescription Drug Registry

- key tool, but needs to be strengthened
 - *real-time data
 - *ability to delegate access
 - *ability to share data with other states
 - * INCLUDE J.A.
- needs stable, adequate funding; should move away from reliance on grants
- current contractor and funding mechanism do not facilitate prompt implementation of needed improvements
- there is some effort going into starting a National Prescription Drug Registry; this makes sense, and in my opinion should be supported if workable proposals come forth.

Support and Strengthen Education Regarding the Rx Drug Abuse Crisis

- public education, including our school systems as well as adults
 - *students need to hear that prescribed drugs are not necessarily safe drugs
 - *strategies for approaching a friend/family member suspected of addiction/abuse
 - *critical importance of early, proper disposal of unused medication
- professional education
 - *availability and use of the MPDR
 - *appropriate prescribing practices
 - *strategies for identifying patients suffering from addiction, as well as drug seekers
 - *emphasize incentives for voluntary participation; avoid mandates!!

Expand the Availability of Medication Drop-off Centers

-still very limited in availability at last check

Facilitate Reporting of Suspected Abuse/Diversion

-Providers receive mixed messages on whether they are able to report concerns within the constraints of HIPAA

*I have been reassured by law enforcement that there are exceptions within HIPAA that allow reporting of suspected criminal activity, including doctor shopping, drug diversion

*I have also received legal opinions from attorneys, including the MMA, which state HIPAA prevents such reporting

This situation begs for clarification and emphasis.

Support Greater Availability of Effective Drug Addiction Treatment

-Cannot break the cycle of addiction/abuse/diversion without better access to treatment, including detox

The Montana Medical Association is forming an ad hoc Committee on Prescription Drug Abuse and I will be a member. The members of this Committee and the Executive Vice-President of the MMA, Jean Branscum, will be readily available to Ms. O'Connell and Committee members for further collaboration if desired.

Thank you so very much for your time and interest in this very important state and national public health crisis.

Sincerely,

William Gallea
