

# Department of Safety and Professional Services: Fight Against Prescription Drugs Takes Another Step Forward April 1

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For Immediate Release

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Madison, WI - Beginning Saturday, April 1, all practitioners who prescribe controlled substances will be required to use the Wisconsin enhanced Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (WI ePDMP). This latest requirement comes from 2015 Act 266, which is a piece of the Heroin, Opioid, Prevention and Education (HOPE) Agenda.

“This new requirement is imperative in ensuring that we continue to prevent opioid abuse,” said Governor Walker. “We have made great strides thus far, and the implementation of this legislation will continue to help us fight the misuse, abuse, and diversion of controlled prescription drugs.”

While some practitioners have voluntarily been using the system since its inception in 2013, law did not require them to do so. This new requirement will require a practitioner to review a patient’s PDMP records before prescribing a controlled substance prescription unless any of the exceptions apply:

A patient is receiving hospice care

The prescription is intended to last the patient three days or less, and is not subject to refill

The drugs are administered directly to a patient

An emergency situation prevents the practitioner from reviewing ePDMP records  
There is a technological failure

“The biggest misconceptions about the ePDMP are that it is only for opioid prescribers and dispensers and that it sets a limit on the amount of medication a patient can receive,” said Department of Safety and Professional Services (DSPS) Secretary Laura Gutiérrez. “In reality, the system tracks prescriptions for all schedule II-V controlled substances. That includes opioids, but also includes benzodiazepines, stimulants and other controlled substances. The amount of medication prescribed or dispensed continues to be up to the healthcare professional’s discretion.”

Also beginning April 1, a change in requirements goes into effect for pharmacies and other dispensers. Since the PDMP’s inception in 2013, dispensers have been required by law to submit dispensing data to the system within seven days. Beginning April 1, pharmacies and dispensing practitioners must submit a monitored prescription drug record to the ePDMP no later than 11:59 p.m. of the next business day after dispensing, providing prescribers better real-time data about their patients.

“The WI ePDMP is a tool to help healthcare professionals make more informed prescribing and dispensing decisions,” said Gutiérrez. “It has already proven to be effective, with nearly 21 million fewer opioid doses being dispensed in the second half of 2016 as compared to the same period in 2015.”

The original Wisconsin PDMP was deployed in June 2013; however DSPS launched an enhanced version, the ePDMP, in January 2017. The WI ePDMP allows for value-added healthcare workflow integration, improved data quality capabilities, and maximized public health and safety use. It also contains analytics and visualizations to draw attention to the most relevant and potentially concerning data in each report, such as a patient’s high levels of opioid consumption or dangerous combination of drugs.