

Wisconsin Dental Association: Wisconsin dentists lead the fight against opioid addiction

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WEST ALLIS, WIS., Dec. 7, 2018 – In response to a recent report regarding dental opioid prescribing habits published in the journal JAMA Internal Medicine, Wisconsin Dental Association President Dr. Patrick Tepe, a general dentist in Verona, issued the following statement:

“My colleagues and I have been working diligently as professionals, and in conjunction with efforts by state officials and lawmakers, to educate practitioners and the public alike regarding the dangers of overprescribing opioids. We are proud that Wisconsin’s Enhanced Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (ePDMP) is one of the most open, accessible systems in the country, providing data to both lawmakers and the public at regular intervals.”

The Controlled Substances Board (CSB) issues quarterly reports on PDMP usage and the impact of its data. For example, because of the 2018 third quarter report:

- The Dentistry Examining Board referred four dentists for investigation whose prescribing practices were clearly outside normal patterns, and indicated potentially suspicious activity;
- A further 12 were referred for investigation due to failure to check the ePDMP properly before prescribing, for a total of 16 referrals, equaling one-half of 1 percent of the 3,000 prescribing dentists in Wisconsin;

- In the past 12 months, the number of opioid prescriptions dispensed fell by just under 9 percent, while a 3 percent drop took place between the second and third quarter of 2018 alone.

In addition to these steps, the Marquette University School of Dentistry has overhauled its pharmacology curriculum for dental students to reflect new practices, and severely curtailed the usage of opioids at its clinics. Furthermore, all Wisconsin dentists are required to take two hours of continuing education on responsible opioid prescribing habits.

Finally, at this year's Mission of Mercy in West Allis, the WDA made an active decision to have its smallest on-site pharmacy in the event's eight year history, keeping only emergency supplies on hand and severely limiting prescriptions.

The Wisconsin Dental Association has 3,000 member dentists and a number of dental hygienists. With just 3,500 licensed dentists in the state, the WDA is the leading voice for dentistry in Wisconsin. WDA members are committed to promoting professional excellence and quality oral health care. Established in 1870, the WDA is headquartered in West Allis and has a legislative office in Madison.

The WDA is affiliated with the American Dental Association – the largest and oldest national dental association in the world. For more information, call 414-276-4520, visit WDA.org and find us on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Flickr, YouTube, Instagram and LinkedIn.