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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS PRESCRIPTION MONITORING
PROGRAM (PMP)**

EXTENDS VIRGINIA'S REACH ACROSS STATE BORDERS

New Technology Makes 74 Million Virginia Prescription Records Available to Registered
Licensed Healthcare Practitioners across State Lines

Editors Note: *The implementation of this technology comes at a time when prescription drug abuse is the fastest growing drug problem in the United States. According to the most recent Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) survey, prescription medications are the second-most abused category of drugs, following marijuana.*

April 26, 2012 – RICHMOND, VA--Virginia is among 13 states to join the fight against drug diversion and illegal use of prescription pain medication through increased online technology. This approach is the result of a cooperative agreement between the Department of Health Professions (DHP) Prescription Monitoring Program (PMP) and the National Association of the Boards of Pharmacy (NABP), PMP InterConnect Project (PMPi).

The DHP PMP public announcement comes days before the Drug Enforcement Administration's (DEA) fourth National Prescription Drug Take Back Day, Saturday, April 28th. While the DEA event, led in communities by local law enforcement, allows citizens to purge medicine cabinets of old prescriptions; PMPi allows licensed prescribers and dispensers of pain medication to make informed medical decisions to meet patient needs through rapid and secure sharing of data among state PMPs.

According to DHP Director, Dianne L. Reynolds-Cane, M.D., "This upgrade to existing PMP software allows PMPs to share prescription data to reduce doctor shopping for illicit drug use across state lines. Additionally, practitioners can confirm legitimate patient prescriptions for a consumer relocating from another state who may need medication in their new location."

During pilot stages of development, conducted over eight months, Virginia has successfully processed over 27,000 requests for patient information from practitioners registered by PMP programs in other states including Ohio and Indiana.

PMP Program Director, Ralph Orr adds, "While pharmacists, emergency room physicians, dentists, family practitioners, nurse practitioners, physician assistants and other authorized practitioners are users of the new PPMi tool in their practices, it is ultimately the people of Virginia who will benefit most. Practitioners use PMP information to confirm compliance with treatment plans and to screen for misuse or abuse of these powerful medications." Orr says once a state signs the NABP agreement PMPi gives them access to a state by state data sharing hub. As of April, thirteen states have joined the program including: Arizona, Connecticut*, Indiana*,

Kansas, Michigan*, Mississippi, New Mexico, North Dakota, Ohio*, South Carolina, Utah, Virginia, and West Virginia.

PMPi resulted from initial research conducted by the Federal Bureau of Justice Assistance to overcome abuse of pain medication and is provided by NABP at no cost to states.

To date the Commonwealth's PMP database contains 74 million prescription records. There are more than twelve thousand registered users of the PMP WebCenter site, making over 14 thousand requests per week. Over 800,000 requests are expected to be processed this year. Practitioners may access the PMP WebCenter 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

PMP is a program of the Department of Health Professions (DHP) which licenses, regulates and disciplines the states more than 350,000 healthcare practitioners across 80 professions including those who prescribe controlled substances. DHPs mission is to ensure safe and competent patient care by licensing health professionals, enforcing standards of practice, and providing information to health care practitioners and the public.

For more information regarding Virginia's PMP or to register with the PMP WebCenter visit the Virginia Department of Health Professions' website at <http://www.dhp.virginia.gov>

*Currently active with the Virginia PMP

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