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Doctor Shopping in Virginia for Illicit Use of Pain Medication is on the Decline
Virginia Department of Health Professions' Prescription Monitoring Program Releases 2013 Data

RICHMOND, VA – Behaviors associated with doctor shopping for the illegitimate use of prescription drugs is on the decline in Virginia, according to newly released data from the Department of Health Professions' (DHP) Prescription Monitoring Program (PMP). The PMP maintains a database of prescriptions written in Virginia, interoperable with 15 other states.

PMP data collected between 2012 and 2013 shows there has been a 73 percent decline in the number of patients identified as seeking simultaneous care from numerous physicians through multiple pharmacies to obtain Schedule II – IV medications. Such controlled substances are often associated with pain management.

“The Prescription Monitoring Program has helped to raise awareness about the problem of pain medication abuse and to amplify actions aimed at putting an end to illegitimate uses of these drugs,” said Bill Hazel, M.D., Secretary of Health and Human Resources. “I applaud the many health care providers who are taking action to keep their communities safe.”

Earlier this year, Governor McAuliffe signed a bill that requires all prescribers to become registered with the PMP system by July 2015. As a result, pharmacists and prescribers in the Commonwealth will automatically be registered with PMP when they renew or apply for licensure. Registered users can query PMP to get real-time information on a person's prescribing history.

Based on the 2013 PMP year-end data posted at http://www.dhp.virginia.gov/dhp_programs/pmp/default.asp, PMP Director, Ralph Orr highlights four trends that point to changes in patient behavior and increased use of the system by registered users that is making a difference in the lives of people statewide. Corresponding charts are attached and include:

- Prescribers and pharmacists made 1.3 million requests to Virginia's PMP in 2013, up from 860,000 in 2012. (Chart 2)
- The overall number of prescriptions being dispensed is trending downward, while the percentage of PMP requests to prescriptions dispensed is increasing. (Chart 7)
- The number of doses of pain relievers is decreasing, although there is an increase in the number of doses of stimulants such as Ritalin® and Adderall® being written. (Chart 10)
- Since 2011, the number of patients identified as doctor shopping has decreased significantly. (Chart 11)

PMP centralizes the prescription history of patients prescribed controlled substances. The information is entered into the PMP databank by a pharmacist or prescriber and creates a record that can be viewed by other practitioners treating the same patient. Virginia's PMP is a secure database operational 24-hours a day, 7 days a week. PMP is a real-time risk management tool used by doctors, pharmacists, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, emergency room physicians and dentists to make treatment decisions on behalf of patients.

The DHP PMP promotes the appropriate use of controlled substances for legitimate medical purposes while deterring the misuse, abuse, and diversion of controlled substances. DHP's 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.

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Total Annual Requests 2010 - 2013

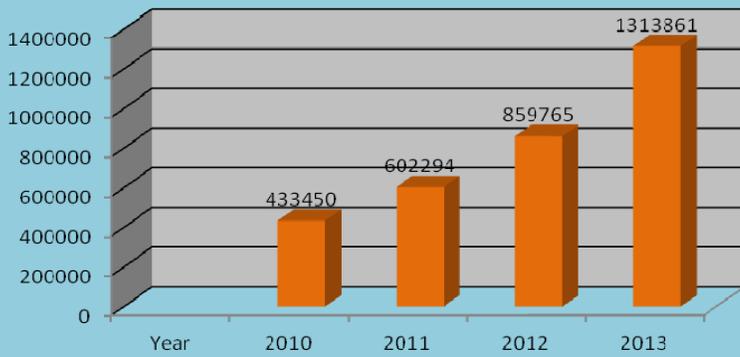


Chart 2:

Prescribers and pharmacists made 1.3 million requests to Virginia's PMP in 2013, up from 860,000 in 2012.

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Prescription Records Added & Request Percentage

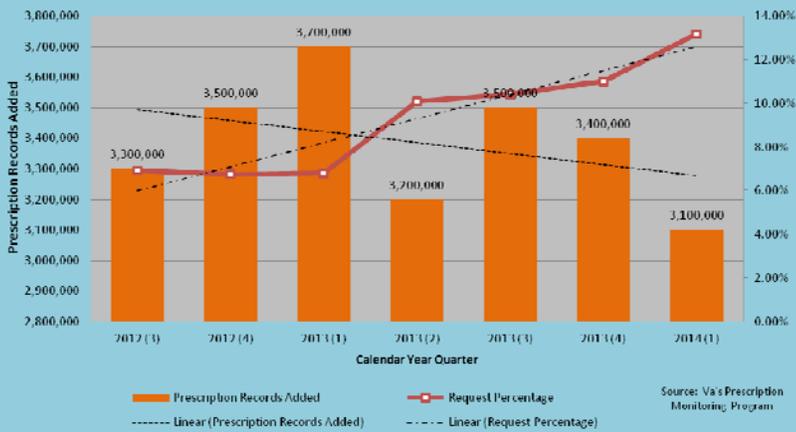


Chart 7:

The number of prescriptions being dispensed is trending downward while the percentage of PMP requests to prescriptions dispensed is increasing.

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Total Number of Doses in Millions Dispensed by Drug Type 1/1/12 - 12/31/13

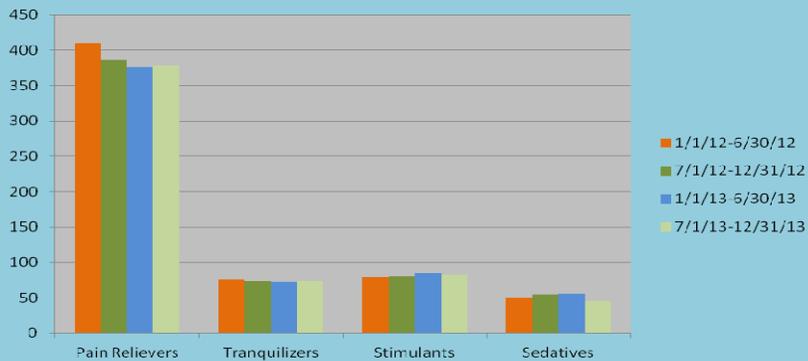


Chart 10:

The number of doses of pain relievers is decreasing, although there is an increase in the number of doses of stimulants such as Ritalin® and Adderall® being written.

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Number of Patients Using Both 10 Prescribers and 10 Pharmacies and 15 Prescribers and 15 Pharmacies CII-IV Prescriptions 2010 -2013

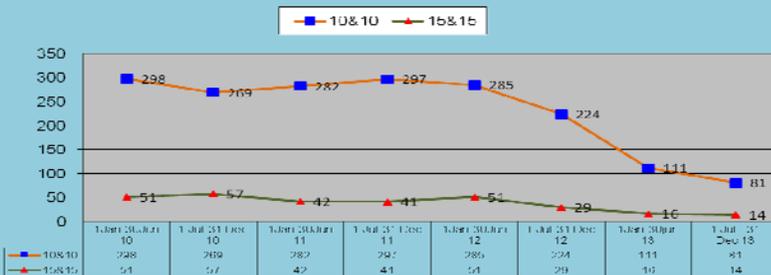


Chart 11:

Since 2011, the number of patients identified as exhibiting doctor shopping behavior has decreased significantly.

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