



F R O M	Name & Title	Oxiris Barbot, M.D. Commissioner of Health 	Health Department MEMO	
	Agency Name & Address	Baltimore City Health Department 1001 E. Fayette St.		
	Subject	Council Resolution 11-0292R – Informational Hearing – Prescription Drug Monitoring Program – Baltimore City Participation and Utilization		

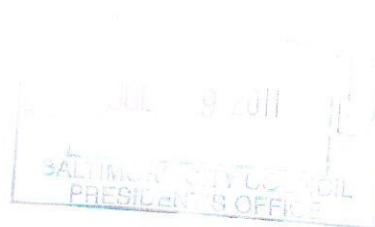
To: President and Members
of The City Council
c/o 409 City Hall

March 25, 2010

The Baltimore City Health Department is pleased to have the opportunity to respond to 11-0292R – Prescription Drug Monitoring Program – Baltimore City Participation and Utilization. This program seeks to monitor the prescribing and dispensing of all Schedule II through V controlled dangerous substances. For each monitored prescription drug dispensed, a dispenser must electronically submit data to PDMP (which will be housed in the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Administration in accordance with regulations adopted by the Secretary of Health). PDMP is the centerpiece of a comprehensive approach to the problem of prescription drug abuse and diversion. More than just a database, the program affords for monitoring, education, treatment, enforcement, and disposal of prescription medications.

This program seeks to balance the needs of patients, physicians and law enforcement by giving DHMH the flexibility to adopt and build upon best practices in the reporting and use of prescription monitoring data while controlling costs. The bill also establishes an advisory board to ensure that all stakeholders, including pain patients and specialists in the fields of pain management and drug abuse/addiction treatment, have an equal voice in guiding program development and implementation. The program also places narrow restrictions on law enforcement access to prescription monitoring data, maximizing patient privacy.

As with abuse of illicit drugs, prescription drug abuse causes substantial harm both to abusers directly and to everyone bearing the indirect burdens on our systems of criminal justice and public health. The evidence cited in this City Council resolution is sobering and indicates that prescription drug use is a significant issue for all of Maryland. Prescription drug abuse is especially prevalent among youth. For the first time, teens are more likely to have abused a prescription painkiller to get high than they are to have experimented with a variety of illicit drugs – including Ecstasy, cocaine, crack and LSD. While there are higher rates of pain reliever abuse in the younger age groups in Baltimore City, pain reliever abuse in older adults has more than doubled between 1998 and 2008, according to hospital admission data. Older adults abuse of prescription medication differs from that of young adults, stemming primarily from medical and not recreational use. This often manifests in unsafe combinations and/or doses that may be obtained by seeking prescriptions from multiple physicians (doctor shopping), by obtaining medications from family members or peers or by stockpiling medications over time.



Comments

PDMPs are associated with reductions in prescription drug abuse. A national evaluation comparing PDMP and non-PDMP states found that proactive PDMPs were associated with slower growth in the per capita availability of prescription pain relievers and stimulants, as well as lower rates of treatment admissions for abuse of these drugs. PDMPs also provide doctors with a powerful tool to improve patient care, as electronic PDMPs can provide clinicians with quick access to patients' prescription drug histories, and research has not detected a significant "chilling effect" on legitimate prescribing of controlled substances for pain management. PDMPs can impact drug abuse and diversion through education and intervention without the involvement of law enforcement, helping to identify individuals engaged in "doctor shopping" an encouraging clinical intervention which makes law enforcement involvement unnecessary.

BCHD believes that PDMP represents an opportunity to combat prescription drug abuse by Baltimore residents. We encourage developing new strategies of identifying, intervening and referring to treatment individuals suffering from prescription drug abuse. As such, the Baltimore City Health Department is pleased to support the PDMP and looks forward to being active in its implementation.