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Calendar of Events

January 5, 2009: Montana Legislature Convenes for 90 day session, Helena

January 9-11, 2009: MPA Winter CE & Ski, Holiday Inn, Bozeman

January 9, 2009: Montana Board of Pharmacy, GranTree Inn, Bozeman

February 9, 2009: Montana Pharmacy Days, State Capitol Rotunda, Helena

May 28-31, 2009: Northwest Convention, Coeur d'Alene, Idaho

MPA Website

www.rxmt.org

MPA members should visit our updated web-site at, www.rxmt.org. We are continuing to add new materials and urge members to visit frequently for legislative news, regulatory updates, CE updates and links to other useful sites.

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Proposed Prescription Monitoring Program in Montana

MPA to support PMP Bill in 2009 Legislative Session

What is a Prescription Monitoring Program (PMP)?

A PMP utilizes a centralized database to collect prescription information which is submitted by pharmacies licensed by the state, including mail order pharmacies. Prescribers, pharmacists, and patients may request information from the PMP which lists the prescriptions filled for a patient during a specified time period including drug, quantity, prescriber, pharmacy, and method of payment.

What is the Purpose of a PMP?

A PMP is intended to be a source of information for prescribers and pharmacists to use in the care of patients. It should be used to supplement a patient evaluation, to

confirm a patient's medication history, or to document compliance with a therapeutic regimen. A PMP is also a tool to help deter prescription drug abuse and diversion. A PMP is NOT intended to prevent patients from obtaining needed medication or to interfere with legitimate prescribing.

What other states have implemented PMPs?

Twenty-nine have active prescription monitoring programs, and another nine states have passed legislation and are in the process of implementing their programs. All of the states bordering Montana have active prescription monitoring programs, except South Dakota, which is also planning to introduce PMP legislation.

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Join the MPA

The Montana Pharmacy Association (MPA) appreciates the support of pharmacy professionals across the state and we are asking you to please renew and/or join us at this time so we can pursue an aggressive agenda in the coming year. To be a member of MPA please fill out the enclosed invoice and return with your check OR visit the MPA website at, www.rxmt.org and click on the "Join" button to pay by credit card.

Reasons for supporting MPA:

Montana 2009 Legislative Session: MPA is your advocate at the Montana Legislature. We are preparing for an active session in 2009 including: the introduction of a bill to create an Advanced Pharmacy Practitioner Act, a bill to add a pharmacist to the Board of Pharmacy and MPA will be working on a bill calling for a Prescription Drug Monitoring Program. Throughout the session members of MPA will receive timely "legislative updates" from our office staff.

Federal Legislation: MPA was a leader in working with other national pharmacy associations during 2008 to help pass federal legislation (H.R. 6331) that delays AMP, provides passage of Prompt Pay, and delays DME Competitive Bidding. We will continue to fight for your interest on federal measures.

Continuing Education: During May of 2008 we co-sponsored the Northwest Pharmacy Convention and we are currently preparing for the Winter CE & Ski January 9-11, 2009 in Bozeman, where you can earn up to 11 continuing educational credit hours and network with other professionals.

Enhanced Member Benefits: MPA has greatly enhanced our member only benefits such as the PAAS National Pharmacy Audit Assistance Service. The Heartland Credit Card and Payroll Processing Programs and expanded our relationship with Pharmacist Mutual Insurance Programs.

In This Issue:

The Dean's Column:
A political perspective on a broken system

Bozeman is the place to be next month—the 2009 CE & Ski





Proposed Prescription Monitoring Program in Montana (continued from page 1)

Does Montana have a prescription drug abuse problem?

According to a national survey conducted annually by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Montana ranks 5th in the U.S. for illicit drug use (including prescription drugs). Montana teens rank 2nd in the nation for abuse of prescription pain relievers. Data from the State Crime Lab shows that 141 deaths were attributed to prescription opioids in 2007 versus 8 deaths attributed to methamphetamine.

How does a PMP work?

Prescription information is submitted electronically to the PMP by pharmacies usually every 7 days. Prescribers and pharmacists must apply to receive access to the PMP. Once access is granted, a prescriber or pharmacist must have a patient relationship with the person on whom a report is requested. The PMP is accessible via computer 24/7 and in most cases a report is available in less than a minute.

How is privacy protected?

The information in the PMP is protected health information under HIPAA. HIPAA allows health care providers to access patient information for the purpose of providing treatment to a patient.

HIPAA allows law enforcement to access patient information with a subpoena or search warrant. The PMP does not allow access to any additional information other than what health care providers or law enforcement currently has or that is allowed under HIPAA.

Is the PMP database secure?

The information is stored on secure servers that are dedicated to the prescription monitoring program, and is exchanged via a secure network. Access to the network is granted when providers

are approved for an account. These are the same security measures implemented by health care organizations to protect electronic medical records.

Where will the PMP database reside?

The PMP will be located in and administered by the Board of Pharmacy. The Board will employ a pharmacist PMP administrator to oversee the program. The PMP database is a stand alone system. It will not be part of the state's computer system.

What is the cost of the PMP and who will pay for it?

The cost to implement a PMP in Montana is estimated to be \$365,000. Federal grant monies are available to help states implement or enhance their PMPs. In 2007, Montana was awarded a \$400,000 PMP grant however the money could not be accepted because the PMP legislation failed to pass. An application is being made for the same grant in 2009. The annual maintenance costs of a PMP are estimated to be \$210,000. If grant monies are not available, the program would be sustained by increasing licensing fees of prescribers, pharmacists, pharmacies, and drug wholesalers. Based on the current number of licensees in Montana, the fee increase is expected to be approximately \$20 per year if it is spread evenly.

What is the cost to pharmacies to submit PMP data?

The cost to pharmacies to submit their prescription data is expected to be minimal to none. Since the majority of states have PMPs, the technology and programming are already available in contemporary pharmacy information systems. If electronic submission of PMP data imposes a financial burden on a pharmacy, the Board will work with that pharmacy to determine a mutually acceptable method of reporting.

Will prescription information be available from IHS and the VA?

Indian Health Service and Veterans Administration are federal programs that are not bound by state law so any information submitted would be voluntary. IHS recently amended its privacy regulations to "...give IHS the discretion to disclose controlled substance prescription data...such as to state prescription drug monitoring programs." Hopefully, the VA will follow suit and both agencies will voluntarily participate. Regardless if their data is submitted, IHS and VA providers may access the PMP for information on their patients.

Can an individual opt out of the PMP?

An individual may make a request to the Board of Pharmacy to have some or all of their prescription information not be made available in the database except for information on controlled substances and drugs of abuse. It will be the Board's responsibility, not the individual's pharmacy, to assure that the individual's information is not available in the database.

MPA is preparing to support a bill in the 2009 Legislative Session to establish a PMP program in Montana. The bill is currently in drafting and we will be sharing copies with interested members as the session approaches. Carrying the bill for MPA and other health professional groups in support of the PMP will be Representative Teresa Henry (D) of Missoula. Representative Henry is a Registered Nurse and past-president of the Montana Nurses Association.

For more information on the proposed PMP in Montana contact the Montana Pharmacy Association at (406) 449-3843.

Montana Pharmacy TODAY

Register For MPA Winter CE and Ski: January 9-11

Registration materials for the 2009 MPA Winter CE and Ski scheduled for January 9-11 in Bozeman are now available and we invite all members to join us for this annual program.

Continuing Education at the Winter Conference will address important topics of interest to practicing pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and students. Participants will learn about current clinical and drug therapy issues in anticoagulation, psychiatry, and lipid management as well as about relevant legislative issues. Discounted ski rates will be available through MPA for Bridger Bowl and we've lined up some fun-filled musical and dancing entertainment. You can register on-line by visiting the MPA web-site at www.rxmt.org.

The MPA Classifieds

Pharmacy For Sale

Excellent Opportunity: Drug Store for sale in Southeastern Montana. Serious inquires invited to call. (406) 978-2410.

Wanted: Independent Pharmacist Owner

Stein's market is located in Eureka Montana, one hour north of the Flathead Valley. A soon to be opened, newly constructed grocery store is designed with a pharmacy which includes a drive up window. All terms are negotiable. Contact Larry Stein at 208-687-0767.



Dean's Column

by David Forbes

Dean, Skaggs School of Pharmacy, College of Health Professions and Biomedical

As always, I appreciate the opportunity to share my thoughts with the MPA membership.

I am going to use this space to share some information I recently learned at the Montana HealthCare Forum which recently was conducted in Helena. The Forum was fortunate to have several first-rate speakers and one speaker most familiar to all was T.R. Reid, a former Washington Post reporter. Mr. Reid has spent a lot of time traveling to and living in several other countries learning about the health care systems in those countries. Thus he has some great ideas to share with the Forum participants, especially an idea I happen to fully agree with. That idea is that our present health care system has some strengths and weaknesses but it is fundamentally broken and cannot be repaired piece-by-piece. It needs to be entirely restructured but in my opinion, that is not going to happen due to the deeply entrenched exceedingly powerful interest groups (and the readership can guess who these groups are!).

The Forum previously had put together a number of working sections, those being referred to as Coverage, Transparency, Value, Delivery, and Consumer Engagement Workgroups and these Workgroups provided reports to the entire Forum during the Helena meeting.



I think our readership will be interested in part of the work of the Transparency Workgroup as they recommended supporting the Board of Pharmacy

proposal for a Prescription Drug Monitoring Program. At the request of the Forum, this Workgroup "examined this plan and concluded that the concept should prove beneficial as an important tool promoting patient safety. A small aspect of this program has a law enforcement application in cases of abuse or illegal activities, but the primary purpose of this program is improving patient safety."

Finally, change is in the wind for sure. With President-Elect Obama appointing former Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle from South Dakota as Secretary of Health and Human Services it is possible that more emphasis will be placed on providing rural health care. And of course Senator Baucus will continue as Chair of the powerful Senate Finance Committee, so again, there may be more emphasis on rural health care. Our Skaggs School of Pharmacy along with the Montana Pharmacists Association need to be ready and able to work with these leaders.

I hope everyone has a great holiday season.

David Forbes, Dean