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NEWS RELEASE

**For Immediate Release**

**Physician Groups Band Together to Address America’s Opioid Crisis**

***AMA convened task force engages physicians to curb opioid abuse***

CHICAGO— Opioid abuse is a serious public health problem that has reached crisis levels across the United States, with [44 people dying each day](http://www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/) from overdose of opioids, and many more develop substance use disorder.

Recognizing the urgency and serious impact of this issue on the health of hundreds of thousands of patients across the country, today the American Medical Association (AMA) Task Force to Reduce Opioid Abuse, as part of the Providers’ Clinical Support System for Opioid Therapies (PCSS-O) project, announced the first of several national recommendations to address this growing epidemic.

The[*AMA Task Force to Reduce Opioid Abuse*](http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/advocacy/topics/preventing-opioid-abuse.page?utm_source=Press_Release&utm_medium=media&utm_term=072715&utm_content=public_health&utm_campaign=marketing_campaign)is comprised of [27 physician organizations including the AMA, American Academy of Addiction Psychiatry (AAAP), 17 specialty and seven state medical societies  as well as the American Dental Association](http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/advocacy/topics/preventing-opioid-abuse/opioid-abuse-task-force.page) that are committed to identifying the best practices to combat this public health crisis and move swiftly to implement those practices across the country.

“The task force is a major PCSS-O initiative and one we hope provides a clear path toward ending the opioid overdose epidemic,” said PCSS-O Medical Director Kevin Sevarino, MD.. “The task force shows a long-term commitment to addressing opioid use disorder, which is at the crux of this crisis.”

The task force’s initial focus will be on efforts that urge physicians to register for and use state-based prescription drug monitoring programs (PDMPs) as part of the decision-making process when considering treatment options. When PDMPs are fully-funded, contain relevant clinical information and are available at the point of care, they have been shown to be an effective tool to help physicians identify patients who may be misusing opioids, and to implement treatment strategies including referral for those in need of further care.

“PDMPs vary greatly in efficacy and functionality from state to state,” said AMA Board Chair-Elect Patrice A. Harris, M.D., MA. “Alone, they will not end this crisis, but they can provide helpful clinical information, and because they are available in nearly every state, PDMPs can be effective in turning the tide to end opioid abuse in the right direction.”

PCSS-O is a collaborative effort led by AAAP in partnership with: Addiction Technology Transfer Center, American Academy of Neurology, American Academy of Pain Medicine, American Academy of Pediatrics, American College of Physicians, American Dental Association, American Medical Association, American Osteopathic Academy of Addiction Medicine, American Psychiatric Association, American Society for Pain Management Nursing, International Nurses Society on Addictions, and Southeast Consortium for Substance Abuse Training.

The new initiative will seek to significantly enhance physicians’ education on safe, effective and evidence-based prescribing. This includes a new resource [web page](http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/advocacy/topics/preventing-opioid-abuse.page?utm_source=Press_Release&utm_medium=media&utm_term=072715&utm_content=public_health&utm_campaign=marketing_campaign) that houses vital information on PDMPs and their effectiveness for physician practices, as well as, a robust national marketing, social and communications campaign to significantly raise awareness of the steps that physicians can take to combat this epidemic and ensure they are aware of all options available to them for appropriate prescribing. More resources can be found at [www.pcss-o.org](file:///C:\Users\Jane\Documents\Press%20Releases\www.pcss-o.org).

“America’s patients who live with acute and chronic pain deserve compassionate, high-quality and personalized care and we will do everything we can to create a health care response that ensures they live longer, fuller and productive lives,” said Dr. Harris.

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**About Providers’ Clinical Support System for Opioid Therapies**  
Providers’ Clinical Support System for Opioid Therapies provides healthcare professionals evidence-based, authoritative, educational opioid use resources offered in multiple media formats, which are cost effective, easy to use, and sensitive to the varied needs of healthcare providers.

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