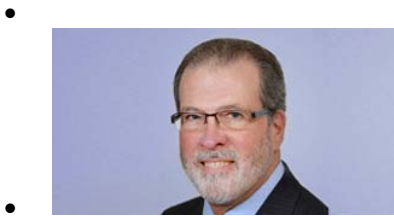


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Pain medicines with abuse-deterrent properties can make a difference

By **David Haddox, DDS, M.D., Vice President, Health Policy at Purdue Pharma L.P.** |
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For more than 30 years, Purdue Pharma has developed opioid medications to alleviate the pain experienced by millions of patients.



As leaders in our field, we are acutely aware of the public health risks these powerful medications create, especially when they are misused or abused.

That's why we're working with policymakers and health experts throughout the country to reduce the risks involving opioids, without reducing appropriate pain treatment. This is a complex problem, but we believe history provides an applicable lesson.

Despite an increase in the number of cars on the road, the rate of automobile fatalities in the United States has steadily [declined](#). It was a combination of technology, regulation, and public awareness – rather than simply limiting the use of cars – that achieved this public good.

In particular it was seatbelts, and the standardization of their use, that really drove the change. Government required manufacturers to make this safety measure standard issue and the public was educated about the risks of driving without them.

This comprehensive approach, with private sector, government, and public collaboration, yielded significant societal benefits, and we believe this successful model can be applied to reducing prescription drug abuse.

Pharmaceutical companies, including Purdue, are developing innovative technologies to create pain medicines in new forms that include abuse-deterrent properties, making them unattractive to drug abusers. These medicines are designed to provide patients with pain relief when taken as directed, while also deterring abuse by snorting and injection.

These new approaches are intended to reduce the risks of opioids. They do not prevent abuse, but they are a step in the right direction and policymakers are helping lead the way. Given the costly technologies involved, the FDA has issued [guidance](#) to incentivize the development of more abuse-deterrent medications. Also, lawmakers are increasingly supporting policies that would require all opioids to have abuse-deterrent properties.

We encourage a transition to abuse-deterrent technologies over time, but it must be accompanied by greater awareness about the nature of prescription drug abuse. The majority of accidental overdose deaths with opioids involve [multiple drugs](#), such as tranquilizers, alcohol, and illicit drugs. Further, federal data show that nearly 70% of people abusing prescription opioids get them from [friends or family](#).

Clearly education will play a critical role in reducing abuse and accidental deaths. Healthcare professionals should be armed with the tools to help them become [better informed](#) about these medicines, so they can best monitor and evaluate their use. Patients should take their medications as directed, store them securely, and [properly dispose](#) of unneeded medicine. Parents and community leaders should educate our youth about the dangers of abusing prescription medicines.

Lawmakers have already taken important steps and they should continue successful efforts, such as shutting down illegal “pill mills,” while recognizing that new restrictions may have unintended consequences for patients with legitimate need. Additionally, government can spur the development of enhanced abuse-deterrent technologies by providing incentives that reward scientific innovation.

Healthcare payers also have an important role. If pain medications with abuse-deterrent properties are approved, but inaccessible to patients, their benefit to society, including direct and indirect savings that may be gained by reducing abuse, will never be realized.

Finally, pharmaceutical companies should continue developing opioids with abuse-deterrent properties in an effort to replace older-generation formulations. When prescription pain medications with abuse-deterrent properties are accessible and used appropriately, then patients, clinicians, payers, and society can all benefit.

J. David Haddox, DDS, MD, a pain physician, is the vice president for health policy for Purdue Pharma L.P.

Read more: <http://www.politico.com/sponsor-content/2014/02/pain-medicines-with-abuse-deterrent-properties-can-make-a-difference/?l=3#ixzz2vtKL71uD>