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Subject: Telehealth and Prescription Drug Abuse

Hi Taneeka,

We have compiled the following information in response to your request for information regarding Telehealth and prescription drug abuse. We hope this provides a helpful overview of the topics and if there are any areas we can expand on or provide additional information, we would be happy to do so.

Telehealth

As we mentioned on the phone, NCSL recently released a new white paper on telehealth, [Telehealth: Policy Trends and Considerations](#), which is available through this link and on our website as a free PDF. The report provides an overview of the issues and state policy trends in relation to telehealth coverage and reimbursement, licensure, and patient safety and security. Effectiveness is also discussed on page 7. We are happy to talk more about any of the issues in the report or provide more information in an areas of interest.

Licensure

States have addressed licensure for out-of-state providers through a few different mechanisms. In some cases, these efforts are directed specifically toward telehealth, and in other cases, they apply

more broadly. For example, some states have reciprocity or other allowances with contiguous states to allow for practice across state lines. Nine states also have special licenses that allow out-of-state providers to offer telehealth services in the state if they meet certain conditions. For example, [Nevada](#) issues a special purpose license for telehealth providers from outside the state.

Many states are also looking at the Federation of State Medical Boards' [Interstate Licensure Compact](#). The Compact allows for an expedited process to license eligible out-of-state physicians, with the goal to increase access to care (including through telehealth). Twelve states passed the Compact language in 2015 and the Interstate Commission—on which two representatives from each state sit—began meeting in October. The Commission will oversee the administration and implementation.

Licensure, including licensure compacts, is also discussed in more depth in the [Telehealth: Policy Trends and Considerations](#) report beginning on page 16. More information about the compact can be found on FSMB's website at licenseportability.org.

Additional Resources

- The [Center for Connected Health Policy](#) is a nonpartisan organization that also tracks legislation and has other resources available on their [website](#).
 - CCHP has a comprehensive [report](#) on state telehealth reimbursement laws and other policies as well; Alaska's policies as of July 2015 start on page 1 of the report (page 15 of the PDF).
- In regards to behavioral health and effectiveness, The Center for Connected Health Policy gathered research on telemental health in a [Research Catalogue](#).
- The American Telemedicine Association is telehealth advocacy organization. They have examined state policies in various areas, and also “grades” states based on their criteria. They have two recent reports:
 - [50-state Telemedicine Gaps Analysis: Coverage and Reimbursement](#), which includes Medicaid reimbursement and private payer laws.
 - [50-state Telemedicine Gaps Analysis: Physician Practice Standards and Licensure](#), which includes policies related to licensure and patient-provider relationships, among others.

Overview: Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention

For general information on prevention of prescription drug overdose and abuse [NCSL's webpage](#) includes an overview of several policies states consider to reduce prescription drug abuse. NCSL also maintain an [injury prevention legislation database](#). Within this database you can search for 2015 and 2016 legislation relating to prescription drug monitoring programs, rescue drugs (e.g., Naloxone) and pain clinics. NCSL houses 2014 legislation for related topics on the following [web page](#).

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention similarly maintains a [“What States Need to Know about the Epidemic” webpage](#) that provides an overview of prescription drug abuse and links to additional resources for [state policies](#), [“state successes,”](#) [state programs](#) and other state specific

examples of efforts to decrease opioid abuse. You can find these resources at the bottom of their webpage under “related pages.”

Prescription Drug Monitoring Programs

Statewide Prescription Drug Monitoring Programs (PDMPs) electronically track prescriptions for controlled substances using data submitted by pharmacies. When suspicious prescribing behavior is detected, these programs can notify certain entities or agencies of possible abuse. These programs can curb inappropriate prescribing behavior and prevent patients from obtaining controlled substances from multiple providers. Legislatures in 49 states enacted laws to create PDMPs, and each state’s program operates differently. Promising strategies legislators may want to consider to strengthen PDMPs follow.

- Encourage interstate exchange of PDMP data by developing interoperability standards with neighboring states.
- Require real-time data reporting to make prescription information, including details on the patient and the provider, available to providers immediately after a drug has been dispensed.
- Require prescribers of controlled substances to participate in the PDMP.
- Allow programs to generate and distribute routine reports to prescribers that track usage and prescribing rates.
- Encourage PDMP data sharing among clinicians, licensure boards, law enforcement, Medicaid Program Integrity offices, researchers, etc., in appropriate circumstances.
- Ensure that providers are knowledgeable about the state’s PDMP and other overdose prevention tools to increase participation.

The above information is [from NCSL’s prescription drug overdose webpage](#), which provides additional information on prescription drug abuse.

NCSL Prescription Drug Monitoring Program Resources

- [Using Prescription Drug Monitoring Programs to Address Drug Abuse](#) is a 2015 LegisBrief that looks at state activity and policy aimed at addressing drug abuse through PDMPs.
- [Spotlight on Prescription Drug Monitoring Program Best Practices](#) is a webinar that examines PDMP review best practices and highlight ways states can maximize the return on investment with their program.
- NCSL’s [injury prevention legislation database](#) (referenced above) is a searchable database for legislation relating to various issues. The search can be narrowed to 2015 and 2016 legislation for all 50-states, relating to prescription drug monitoring programs.

Additional PDMP Resources

- [The National Alliance for Model State Drug Laws](#) provides state profiles of PDMP programs. These profiles include state law and policy profiles.
- [The Prescription Drug Monitoring Program Training and Technical Assistance Center](#) out of Brandeis University provides various resources that aim to “to help PDMPs promote best

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practices and consistency in their programs.” This site houses many resources, including state profiles, policy and procedures, and other reports.