

Evaluating the Efficacy of Checking the PDMP in Wisconsin on Reducing Opioid Prescriptions

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Objective: To determine whether mandatory prescriber review of a prescription drug monitoring program prior to each issuance of a controlled substance resulted in a reduction in the total number of controlled substance prescriptions dispensed.

Design: A retrospective review of the State of Wisconsin's prescription drug monitoring program (PDMP) controlled substance database from April 2015 to March 2019 was performed. The evaluation compared the number of prescriptions among individual drug classes (opioids, benzodiazepines, stimulants) dispensed throughout the state both before and after April 1st, 2017, when implementation of a state law mandating the review of the PDMP during each patient encounter prior to issuing a prescription for a controlled substance took effect.

Results: Prior to the enforcement of the state's mandatory PDMP legislation, an average of 844,314 controlled substance prescriptions were written monthly. Following the implementation of the law, the average monthly total prescriptions written within the state decreased to 708,063. This was an average monthly reduction of 136,251 prescriptions written or 16.1%. Statistically significant reductions were also seen in opioid and benzodiazepine subgroups (23.0%, 16.3%).

Conclusion: Our study suggests that state-enforced mandatory usage of a prescription drug monitoring program at every encounter prior to prescribing any controlled substance can provide for a significant reduction in controlled substance prescriptions, specifically opioids and benzodiazepines.