# NABP's Role in Combating the Opioid Epidemic

**NABP® is a nonprofit association that protects public health by assisting member boards of pharmacy and offering programs to promote safe pharmacy practices for the benefit of patients.**

An epidemic during a pandemic. The current COVID-19 pandemic has occurred against the backdrop of the ongoing opioid epidemic. Nearly 72,000 Americans died from drug overdoses in 2019. The pandemic has exacerbated this crisis furthering the need for robust interventions. NABP has continued to assist boards of pharmacy in their efforts to combat the opioid epidemic, and recommends policy solutions to further those efforts.

## PREVENT MISUSE OF PRESCRIPTION OPIOIDS

Prescription drug monitoring programs (PDMPs) are designed to help health care providers easily identify and act upon inappropriate prescribing and dispensing.

Since each state and territory runs its own PDMP, the success of the system depends on the ability to share data across state lines and to integrate data into clinical workflow.

### NABP PROGRAMS

NABP's PMP InterConnect® facilitates secure and legal interstate data sharing for almost all 54 state and territory PDMPs plus the Defense Health Agency at no cost to the states or the taxpayer.

NABP's PMP Gateway currently provides clinical integration, or "one-click" access to PDMP data within electronic health records (EHRs) and pharmacy management systems, to over 40 PDMPs.

### NABP POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- The federal government should not disrupt the existing interstate data sharing system operating across the country. DOJ and CDC grant requirements that create a duplicative interstate data sharing system should be removed.

- Instead, federal programs should build upon the existing system and help states to further clinical integration.
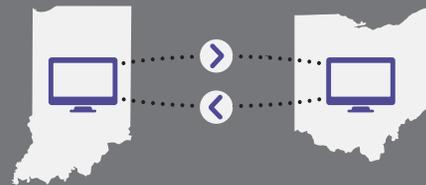
**52 OF THE 54 PDMPs IN THE STATES AND TERRITORIES** are connected to NABP's PMP InterConnect®, which processes more than 400 million responses each month.

PDMP data is integrated directly into patient records with one-click, reducing the clinical burden and saving an average of **2-5 MINUTES PER PATIENT.**

92 million patient encounters per month equals **HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS OF MINUTES SAVED** by pharmacists and physicians.
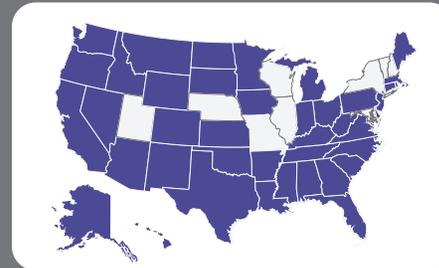
**OVER 40 STATES** have implemented these integrations into the workflow of over 800,000 clinicians across nearly 100,000 facilities across the country.

## INCREASE ACCESS TO MEDICATION-ASSISTED TREATMENT FOR OPIOID USE DISORDER

Medication-assisted treatment (MAT), the use of medications (buprenorphine, methadone, or naltrexone) in combination with counseling and behavioral therapies, is an effective treatment for opioid use disorder (OUD). The current OUD treatment workforce is insufficient to address the rising demand for care. Due to burdensome requirements and other factors, only 3% of eligible providers have taken the steps necessary to offer buphenorphine to their patients.

### BOARD OF PHARMACY ACTIONS

Pharmacists are often the most accessible provider in a community and are ready and willing to offer MAT services. Pharmacists already dispense MAT and play a role in the care of the patient; boards are considering updating prescribing laws to ensure they can also prescribe MAT, but federal law currently prohibits this.

### NABP POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- The federal government should empower states, leverage pharmacists, and protect public health by removing unnecessary federal restrictions and allowing states to determine the appropriate provider requirements for their communities.

- Congress should pass H.R. 2482/S. 2074 the Mainstreaming Addiction Treatment (MAT) Act to remove the antiquated and burdensome DATA 2000 waiver process which categorically excludes pharmacists from offering MAT to their patients even when state law allows it.

21.2 million people aged 12 or older needed treatment for substance use in 2018; **ONLY 17.5% OF THEM RECEIVED ANY TREATMENT THAT YEAR.**

In 2017, **1.7 MILLION AMERICANS** in need of MAT were **UNABLE TO ACCESS TREATMENT**.

## INCREASE ACCESS TO OPIOID OVERDOSE REVERSAL MEDICATION (NALOXONE)

Naloxone, an FDA-approved medication, is a safe opioid antidote that is used to temporarily reverse the effects of respiratory distress during an opioid overdose. When administered in the proper window of time, it has saved thousands of lives. Despite increases in national naloxone distribution, the rate of naloxone dispensed per high-dose opioid prescription is still not as high as expected.

### BOARD OF PHARMACY ACTIONS

Naloxone access laws have been enacted in all 50 states, which allow standing orders for naloxone dispensing, allow pharmacist prescribing of naloxone and/or encourage pharmacists to dispense naloxone with high-dose opioid prescriptions. Pharmacists also advise patients and caretakers on how to recognize an overdose and administer naloxone to prevent accidental overdose.

### NABP POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- States should continue to assess and expand laws that expand access to naloxone, including standing orders, pharmacist prescribing, and co-prescribing.

- Federal funding should encourage access to naloxone and patient.

- Support FDA's requirement that labels for opioid pain medication and medicine to treat opioid use disorder contain information on naloxone.

- Support the Surgeon General's recommendation that in addition to first responders, ordinary citizens should carry naloxone.

- Support HHS' recommendation for clinicians to co-prescribe naloxone to individuals who are at risk of overdose.

**70%**
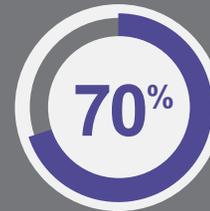
**IN 2017, 7 OUT OF EVERY 10 PEOPLE WHO DIED FROM DRUG OVERDOSE HAD OPIOID INVOLVEMENT.**

Furthermore, research shows most opioid overdose deaths are accidental.

**NABP**
National Association of Boards of Pharmacy

## ENSURE SAFE DISPOSAL OF UNUSED MEDICATIONS

Safely disposing of unused prescriptions can prevent abuse and accidental misuse.

### NABP PROGRAMS

NABP's Safe.Pharmacy resource is an ongoing national campaign providing resources and educational material to the public and providers on prescription drug misuse and abuse. A part of this program is NABP's Drug Disposal Locator Tool, which helps patients and caregivers find drug disposal sites in their communities.

### NABP POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Congress should support investments in federal programs, including efforts like the National Prescription Drug Take Back Day and substance and opioid abuse prevention, treatment, surveillance, and recovery programs.

NABP Drug Disposal Locator Tool currently lists nearly **8,000 PRESCRIPTION DRUG DISPOSAL LOCATIONS**.

## MAINTAIN THE INTEGRITY OF THE PHARMACEUTICAL SUPPLY CHAIN

NABP assists states and the federal government in regulating the practice of pharmacy all along the pharmaceutical supply chain, including regulating drugs sold on the internet.

### NABP PROGRAMS

Streamlining the regulation process is a core service that NABP provides the states. This includes resources and programs for boards of pharmacy to ensure critical regulatory functions occur such as facility inspections, licensing, license transfer, accreditation, and pharmacist examination.

To help the public identify safe websites from which to buy drugs online, NABP runs the .Pharmacy Verified Websites Program.

### NABP POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- The federal government should work collaboratively with state governments and avoid intervening unnecessarily in state regulation in order to ensure that all actors in the pharmaceutical supply chain are appropriately licensed, inspected, and accredited (as applicable).

In the first six months of 2019, NABP identified **MORE THAN 1500 NEW WEBSITES THAT WERE ILLEGALLY SELLING PRESCRIPTION DRUGS**, nearly a third of which offered opioids.

### RESOURCES

- www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/vsrr/drug-overdose-data.htm
- www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/68/wr/mm6831e1.htm
- www.hhs.gov/surgeongeneral/priorities/opioids-and-addiction/naloxone-advisory/index.html
- www.naspa.us/resource/naloxone-access-community-pharmacies/
- www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/data/statedeaths.html
- www.hhs.gov/about/news/2018/12/19/hhs-recommends-prescribing-or-co-prescribing-naloxone-to-patients-at-high-risk-for-an-opioid-overdose.html