

Prescription Drug Monitoring Programs Show Promise at Curbing Abuse, but Need Improvement



Prescription drug monitoring programs (PDMPs) have been established in most U.S. states to track prescriptions of opioid analgesics, sedatives, and amphetamine-type stimulants.

Abuse of such drugs—especially opioids—has reached epidemic proportions, and PDMPs have the potential to help authorities monitor and curb diversion through illegal practices like "doctor shopping," prescription forgery, and theft.

Such programs are also increasingly being used by doctors to improve patient care. But according to the authors of a new review in *Health Affairs*, programs vary widely in their design, function, and who has access to data, and although there is some evidence PDMPs are beneficial, their overall impact remains unclear.

To better realize the promise of PDMPs, the authors recommend greater interstate cooperation and standardization among programs, making programs proactive by issuing routine reports of suspicious activity even if unsolicited, educating providers about effective PDMP use, better integrating such programs into the workflow of clinicians, and increasing funding support.

Source: [NIH](#).