

States Try Variety of Tactics to Fight Prescription Drug Abuse



States are trying a variety of strategies to fight prescription drug abuse, from tightening regulations on pain management clinics to increasing access to prescription monitoring program databases, *USA Today* reported recently.

Indiana has given the state Attorney General increased oversight powers on pain management clinics. The state is also considering mandatory yearly drug screenings for people prescribed opioids, to ensure they are taking the medication as instructed.

Alabama's governor signed into law measures that provide increased access to the state's prescription monitoring program database for medical personnel, as well as the state's Medicaid agency. The state has made "doctor shopping" punishable by up to a year in jail.

In Kentucky, law enforcement officials now have greater access to the state's prescription drug monitoring database. A law signed by the governor last year requires doctors to examine patients and check electronic prescription records before they write a prescription for opioid painkillers.

A law enacted last year in Washington state sets dosage limits for physicians who prescribe opioids. Prescriptions over a certain amount require a second opinion from a pain specialist, the article notes.

New York has instituted the I-STOP program, which requires doctors and pharmacists to check the state's drug monitoring database before they prescribe opioids. "I think the next big step is to get it done at the national level so people can't be moving from state to state and getting prescriptions that way," New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman told the newspaper