

ARKANSAS PLAN
PRESCRIPTION ABUSE
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND: Data indicators including drug overdose deaths, substance abuse treatment needs, state crime lab autopsy results and surveys of school age children all indicate an increasing problem with the misuse of prescription drugs in Arkansas.

STRATEGIC PLAN: A group of more than 70 Arkansans met in March, 2013 to discuss issues concerning the growing problem of prescription drug abuse in our state. Recommendations and action steps were identified to develop a state plan to address this issue. The plan serves as an evolving document that involves stakeholders from various disciplines and interests.

There are five major areas identified for discussion in the state plan: Prevention and Education; PDMP Operation; Data Improvement/Evaluation; System of Prescription Drug Disposal; and Treatment and Recovery.

Prevention and education efforts were identified to target health care providers, school age children, and the general public. Highlighted initial activities for health care providers have led to the development of recommended prescribing guidelines for emergency departments supported by major health care organizations/associations. School age efforts include the development of a tool kit for teachers and counselors with a plan for training and dissemination of materials in development. A media event in association with the state conference targeted the general public and will be followed by other media efforts.

The Arkansas legislature authorized the development of a Prescription Drug Monitoring Registry in 2011. An advisory committee has been established to support the program. Funding has been secured and the program nears full implementation. Dispensers have provided a six month history to the registry, a pilot prescriber and dispenser registration process is on-going and open registration anticipated in June, 2013.

The data improvement/evaluation group has identified multiple collectors of indicators of prescription use and abuse. They begin meeting in May to collate information into one report and provide historic data to plot trends over time for these indicators. Legislation passed during the 2013 legislative session will provide training opportunities for coroners in the state, with assessing the role of prescription drug abuse as a highlighted facet. The group has also been tasked to establish a plan to evaluate program efforts.

Arkansas has a strong history of development of a system for prescription drug disposal through the drug take back program. The program needs to continue to grow with increased access, plans for drug destruction, and response to evolving DEA disposal guidelines.

The final highlighted area in the state plan involves treatment and recovery. Development of a statewide resource directory and exploring the use of telemedicine are components of the plan. Expanding treatment access through implementation of the Affordable Care Act will expand treatment parity.