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**Physician Groups Band Together to Address America’s Opioid Crisis**  
*AMA convened task force engages physicians to curb opioid abuse*

CHICAGO—Opioid abuse is a serious public health problem that has reached crisis levels across the United States, with [44 people dying each day](#) from overdose of opioids, and many more becoming addicted. Recognizing the urgency and serious impact of this issue on the health of hundreds of thousands of patients across the country, today the American Medical Association (AMA) Task Force to Reduce Opioid Abuse announced the first of several national recommendations to address this growing epidemic.

The [AMA Task Force to Reduce Opioid Abuse](#) is comprised of [27 physician organizations including the AMA, American Osteopathic Association, 17 specialty and seven state medical societies as well as the American Dental Association](#) that are committed to identifying the best practices to combat this public health crisis and move swiftly to implement those practices across the country.

“We have joined together as part of this special Task Force because we collectively believe that it is our responsibility to work together to provide a clear road map that will help bring an end to this public health epidemic,” said AMA Board Chair-Elect Patrice A. Harris, M.D., MA. “We are committed to working long-term on a multi-pronged, comprehensive public health approach to end opioid abuse in America.”

The task force’s initial focus will be on efforts that urge physicians to register for and use state-based prescription drug monitoring programs (PDMPs) as part of the decision-making process when considering treatment options. When PDMPs are fully-funded, contain relevant clinical information and are available at the point of care, they have been shown to be an effective tool to help physicians identify patients who may be misusing opioids, and to implement treatment strategies including referral for those in need of further care. “PDMPs vary greatly in efficacy and functionality from state to state,” said Dr. Harris. “Alone, they will not end this crisis, but they can provide helpful clinical information, and because they are available in nearly every state, PDMPs can be effective in turning the tide to end opioid abuse in the right direction.”

The AMA has long advocated in support of important initiatives aimed at addressing prescription drug abuse and diversion. This includes continued work with the administration and Congress toward developing balanced approaches to end prescription opioid misuse, as well as supporting congressional and state efforts to modernize and fully fund PDMPs.

The new initiative will seek to significantly enhance physicians’ education on safe, effective and evidence-based prescribing. This includes a new resource [web page](#) that houses vital information on PDMPs and their effectiveness for physician practices, as well as, a robust national marketing, social and communications campaign to significantly raise awareness of the steps that physicians can take to combat this epidemic and ensure they are aware of all options available to them for appropriate prescribing.

“America’s patients who live with acute and chronic pain deserve compassionate, high-quality and personalized care and we will do everything we can to create a health care response that ensures they live longer, fuller and productive lives,” said Dr. Harris.

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**About the AMA**

The American Medical Association is the premier national organization dedicated to empowering the nation's physicians to continually provide safer, higher quality, and more efficient care to patients and communities. For more than 165 years the AMA has been unwavering in its commitment to using its unique position and knowledge to shape a healthier future for America.

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