



Band-Aids Just a Cover-up!

By Angela Wall

Drug abuse cannot simply be fixed with a Band-Aid. As a society, it seems to be easier to ignore a problem and let someone else handle it instead of realizing if **everyone** did their part it would make a big issue smaller. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, prescription drug abuse has become an epidemic and Oklahoma is the #1 state in the nation with this problem. So what has been done?

Innovative and intelligent people at the Oklahoma Bureau of Narcotics (OBN) have created a way to help deter the use of prescription drugs for illegal purposes. The system created is called the Prescription Monitoring Program (PMP).

In 1990, Oklahoma became the first state in the US to implement a computerized prescription monitoring program. OBN has continued improving the system to make it more effective and efficient for their registrants. Although many states have since created their own version of the PMP, Oklahoma is still the only state that has the “Real Time” reporting benefit – information of a controlled dangerous substance (CDS) being reported within 5 minutes of being dispensed. So how can the system be used?

By **all** dispenser’s accurately reporting information into the system, Health Care Professionals (HCPs) that are authorized to use the system can receive patient-specific reports along with their own prescribing reports – this includes pharmacy dispensing reports. These reports can help determine those with a legitimate use for prescription drugs and guard against those using them illegally.

By using the “Patient Report”, pharmacists can receive dispensed CDS data on each of their pharmacy customers. The pharmacists can use the report to check for any prescription fraud, including “Doctor Shopping” and/or forgery. The information can also be discussed with the customer to verify accuracy but may not be given to the customer at any time.

By using the “Pharmacy Report”, all dispensing activity under the pharmacy’s NCPDP# can be compiled for a specified period of time. This report can be checked for any unusual dispensing activity and fraud. Remember, employee fraud can also occur.

If **all** OBN registrants register for the PMP, use it regularly and dispensers enter information accurately, then prescription drug abuse will be reduced in Oklahoma. It doesn’t matter how much or how little is prescribed or dispensed, a drug seeker will try to get whatever they can from whomever they can. No HCP wants to be taken advantage of, so using the PMP will not only help guard against diversion but it will ultimately safeguard the HCP, their name and their reputation.

In the end, many patients need to understand that pain is their body’s way of saying something is wrong and pills can’t fix everything. HCPs need to **all** realize it is time to rip off the Band-Aid and expose prescription drug abuse for what it really is – a big problem.

Those who have questions about PMP registration may contact the Help Desk at 877-627-2674. If any groups (large or small) need PMP training, please contact Angela Wall at 800-522-8031 ext. 162.