



Getting High on Prescription Drug Safety

"...Usage of our prescription monitoring program has increased from 3,000 reports a day to 20,000. That increased usage is helping prescribers to make more informed prescribing decisions."

---Van Ingram, Executive Director, Kentucky Office of Drug Control Policy

The Challenge

Injury prevention experts concerned about Kentucky residents' elevated prescription drug fatality rate noted that 16 prescription drug overdose deaths (2000-2010) were found to be work-related. Though worker overdoses on the job can occur for various reasons, overuse and abuse of opioid drugs for chronic pain from work-related injury has been increasingly discussed as a current workers' compensation issue. One strategy to prevent prescription drug abuse is to have an electronic prescription drug reporting and monitoring system in which controlled substance providers can use view drugs prescribed by all providers for their patients. However, less than one-third of prescribers were enrolled in the state's voluntary electronic prescription monitoring system, the Kentucky All Schedule Prescription Electronic Reporting (KASPER) system.

The Response

In 2012, the Kentucky legislature passed House Bill 1, a law mandating the enrollment of physicians and pharmacists who prescribe or dispense Schedule II and III drugs in KASPER. Occupational health professionals with the Kentucky Injury Prevention and Research Center's Safety and Prevention Alignment Network (KSPAN) informed the development of this legislation by providing data, networking, and participating on policymaking committees. Many partners were involved in this effort, including the Kentucky Office of Drug Control Policy, Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky, Kentucky Hospital Association, and Kentucky Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities.

The Impact

In 2012, enrollment of prescribers more than tripled after the passage of the legislation, and total doses of all controlled substances dropped more than 10% in 2013, compared to 2012. Although data on prescription-related overdose deaths are not yet available, these downward trends in prescribing suggest that prescription drug overdose mortality and morbidity should lessen as providers use the KASPER tool to monitor patients' prescriptions.

For more information, visit the KASPER quarterly report:

<http://www.chfs.ky.gov/NR/rdonlyres/FB77F3A5-3019-496C-97E8-36993B710F90/0/KASPERQuarterlyTrendReportQ12013.pdf>