



The Maryland State Medical Society

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MEDCHI RELEASES AN OPIOID PRESCRIPTION RATE STUDY

Maryland Physicians are Writing Fewer Opioid Prescriptions

BALTIMORE, May 4, 2017 — MedChi, The Maryland State Medical Society released a study showing Maryland Physicians are writing fewer opioid prescriptions.

MedChi President Elect and Chair of the MedChi Opioid Task Force, Gary Pushkin, MD, explained “MedChi has long recognized that Maryland has an overdose problem and has been working diligently to address the opioid crisis. We have been a leader on education and outreach regarding this crisis for the last few years, and it appears that physician outreach is paying dividends.”

The study found Maryland physicians have changed their prescription patterns. Key takeaways include:

- Maryland opioid prescriptions have dropped 13.3% in the last four years from 4,229,380 in 2013 to a total of 3,664,825 in 2016 (graph 1)
- Maryland has prescribed fewer opioid prescriptions than the National average, each year from 2013-2016.
- In 2016, only 7 states prescribed fewer opioids per capita compared to Maryland, with 17 states prescribing the same amount, and 26 states prescribing more opioids per capita (graph 2)
- In 2016, Maryland prescribers were prescribing 0.6 prescriptions per capita, which is below the national average of 0.7 prescriptions per capita

MedChi’s education and outreach efforts have been sustained for several years. For the last two years, MedChi has joined forces with the Chesapeake Regional Information System for our Patients (CRISP) to visit physician offices and enroll physicians in the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP). The PDMP monitors the prescribing and dispensing of drugs that contain controlled dangerous substances (CDS). For more information, please visit <http://www.medchi.org/Practice-Services/CRISP-Services>.

MedChi has been a leader in Continuing Medical Education (CME) on opioid issues. MedChi has delivered thousands of CME credits to Maryland physicians under the Safe Opioid Prescribing and Risk Evaluation and Mitigation Strategies (REMS). Over the last two years, we helped the Board get every Maryland physician at least one credit of opioid related CME. MedChi has also developed an educational series on Physician Dispensing in Maryland. The Physician Dispensing Educational Series is in collaboration between MedChi, and the University of Maryland School of Pharmacy.

More recently, we have been working with the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) and Board of Physician officials on additional voluntary CME options. MedChi President Elect, Gary Pushkin, MD, will be spearheading this effort and coordinating the work of the various MedChi committees.

Clearly this crisis tops Maryland’s public health concern, and we all need to work to reduce the number of opioid-related deaths. According to the Washington Post, “In Maryland, the number of heroin-related overdose deaths rose 72 percent, to 918, during the first nine months of last year, compared to the same period in 2015. Fatal overdoses related to prescription opioids jumped 17

percent, to 270, during that span.” MedChi stands willing and ready to help leaders with common sense solutions to this crisis.

QuintilesIMS worked with the American Medical Association to compile data on the total filled prescriptions in each state for all opioid analgesics. There is completed available data for the years 2013 to 2016 ([see attached](#)).

The study concluded that each U.S. state saw a decrease in opioid prescribing during this time frame (2013-2016). While there are many hypotheses and correlations that can undoubtedly be made concerning the data, one is clearly that physicians have been more judicious in their prescribing decisions. The hopes with utilizing the PDMP are to continue this downward trend in prescribing and continue increasing awareness for this epidemic.

About MedChi

MedChi, The Maryland State Medical Society, is a non-profit membership association of Maryland physicians. It is the largest physician organization in Maryland. The mission of MedChi is to serve as Maryland's foremost advocate and resource for physicians, their patients and the public health of Maryland. For more information, please visit www.medchi.org.