

# POLICY PRIMER



UF College of Medicine  
Division of Addiction Medicine  
Drug Policy Institute

## Florida's PDMP: An Early Success Story of Tackling Florida's Prescription Drug Abuse Epidemic

University of Florida  
Drug Policy Institute  
(Division of Addiction Medicine)

The UF Institute for Drug Policy (DPI) serves the state of Florida, the Nation, and the global community in delivering evidence-based, policy-relevant, information to policymakers, practitioners, scholars, and the community to make educated decisions about issues of policy significance in the field of substance use, abuse, and addiction.

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## INTRODUCTION

Florida has implemented a comprehensive strategy to reduce illicit diversion of prescription drugs, while at the same time supporting patient privacy rights and the benefits that pharmaceuticals – when properly prescribed, dispensed and taken – routinely bring to citizens in pain. A critical tool in this balanced approach to reduce prescription drug diversion and abuse has been Florida's Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP), called the Electronic Florida Online Reporting of Controlled Substances Evaluation (E-FORCSE) program. Created by the 2009 Florida Legislature, E-FORCSE encourages safer prescribing of controlled substances through the collection and storage of prescription and dispensation data for controlled substances in Schedules II, III, and IV.

## LEGISLATIVE ALERT:

HB 831 and SB 1192 are designed to further strengthen Florida's PDMP by utilizing state and pharmaceutical funds to sustain its continued operation. HB 831 and SB 1192 build off of gains already made by the current state PDMP.

## WHAT DOES FLORIDA'S PDMP DO?

- Florida's PDMP allows medical professionals to input and receive accurate and timely information about their patients in order to make sound clinical decisions when prescribing and dispensing controlled substances.
- It allows medical professionals to identify questionable prescription drug activity and facilitates the identification, intervention, and treatment of persons addicted to prescription drugs.
- The program protects patient privacy by preventing law enforcement agencies from requesting data from the program manager *except* when they are conducting active investigations regarding potential criminal activity, fraud, or theft of prescribed controlled substances.

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## FLORIDA'S PDMP HAS BEEN A SUCCESS

- E-FORCSE is already seeing positive results with a reduction in the number of “doctor shopping” patients (people who visit multiple doctors and pharmacists and obtain prescription drugs by withholding information). The number of individuals visiting five or more physicians and five or more pharmacies in a 90-day period has fallen by 35%.<sup>1</sup>
- Florida is now **reporting a decline** in the number of prescription drug deaths. The significance of this decline cannot be overstated: during the previous six years, prescription drug deaths were increasing by 12% on average each year, *with oxycodone deaths increasing an average of 35% each year*. Since 2003, oxycodone deaths increased each and every year and were a major factor in Florida’s prescription drug overdose death rate. In 2011, however, oxycodone driven overdose deaths in Florida decreased by 17.7% (268 fewer deaths). Overall, there were fewer prescription drug-related deaths (171 fewer deaths, a 6 percent decline), including slightly fewer overdose deaths caused by hydrocodone and methadone.<sup>2</sup>

## CHALLENGES

The early success of Florida’s system has caused numerous unscrupulous doctors and rogue pharmacy operations to move out of the state, often to neighboring Georgia, which has a non-operational PDMP. As is often the case in reducing drug abuse, a single component does not ensure a strategy’s long-term success. Rather, E-FORCSE must continue to be viewed as an integral part of a coordinated plan to curtail and eventually end Florida’s prescription drug abuse epidemic.

## THE WAY AHEAD

A major step forward in systematically rolling back prescription drug diversion and abuse was the passage of HB 7095 during the 2011 legislative session. This significant piece of legislation reduced the reporting time to the state’s PDMP from 15 days to 7 days. However, Florida law prohibits E-FORCSE from sharing its data with other states. E-FORCSE staff is currently negotiating Memoranda of Understanding with Alabama and Kentucky PDMP administrators to allow one way data exchanges with Florida.<sup>3</sup> The successful conclusion of these negotiations would improve the reliability and effectiveness of the PDMP.

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<sup>1</sup> Florida Department of Health. (2013). *Florida’s Prescription Drug Monitoring Program*. Presentation before the Senate Health Policy Committee, January 23, 2013.

<sup>2</sup> Florida Department of Law Enforcement. (2012). *2011 Medical Examiners Commission Drug Report- Drugs Identified in Deceased Persons Report*. Retrieved from: [http://www.fdle.state.fl.us/Content/getdoc/fa86790e-7b50-45f3-909d-c0a4759fefa8/2011-Drug-Report\\_Final.aspx](http://www.fdle.state.fl.us/Content/getdoc/fa86790e-7b50-45f3-909d-c0a4759fefa8/2011-Drug-Report_Final.aspx)

<sup>3</sup> Florida Department of Health. (2012). *2011-2012 Prescription Drug Monitoring Program Annual Report*. Retrieved from: <http://www.eforcse.com/docs/2012AnnualReport.pdf>