

Mission:

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



Rick Scott
Governor

John H. Armstrong, MD, FACS
State Surgeon General & Secretary

Vision: To be the **Healthiest State** in the Nation

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FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO ENHANCE PRIVACY SAFEGUARDS AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR PRESCRIPTION DRUG MONITORING PROGRAM USERS

TALLAHASSEE –The Florida Department of Health (DOH) is strengthening privacy and accountability measures for the safekeeping of confidential prescription information after release from the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP) database. The Department is collaborating with law enforcement agencies and the Attorney General's office to strengthen existing policies established to protect health information.

“The PDMP works daily to save the lives of those with prescription narcotic addiction and privacy is job one,” said State Surgeon General and Secretary of Health Dr. John Armstrong. “That’s why today the Department is taking steps forward to put additional safeguards in place to prevent any unauthorized use of information that is intended to save lives. Moreover, I want to thank the Florida Prosecuting Attorneys Association for adopting procedures that provide further safeguards on how information from the program is used in court proceedings.”

Since its inception in 2011, the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program has complied with the strict standards set by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) for management of the database. The Department is now developing its rules related to access and security of information once released from the database. The Department will hold a rule development workshop on July 8, 2013, to identify any existing gaps in these areas and to establish accountability standards for users of PDMP information. This will provide the opportunity for the public and those with any privacy concerns to give input about ways to strengthen the safeguards that exist to protect prescription information.

In collaboration with law enforcement, the Department is currently exploring additional security enhancements including:

- More clearly displayed penalties for improper disclosure on the program’s web-based disclosure screens;
- Limiting the number of allowable credentialed users for all qualifying agencies;
- Creating an agency administration notification system requiring that all agency administrators be notified when a credentialed user from said agency has made a request of the PDMP;
- Developing a disqualification process for credentialed users who improperly handle confidential prescription information from the system.

“The PDMP protects all Floridians’ confidential information and their need for privacy”, said State Representative Mike Fasano. “Enhancing safeguards of the PDMP to protect patient privacy while furthering PDMP’s mission to reduce prescription drug abuse is paramount to the sustainability and prolonged success of this vital program.”

Pensacola State Attorney and President of the Florida Prosecuting Attorneys Association Bill Eddins said, “The Dept. of Health is taking the right steps in enhancing current protections and creating additional safeguards for the use of private information. This process will provide all stakeholders with the opportunity to work together on how we can improve this program, so we can keep communities

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safe and protect individuals' privacy. We at the Florida Prosecuting Attorneys Association place a critical importance on the privacy of families that we work to protect, and we look forward to working with the Department to enhance the protections of this program.”

“The PDMP is a powerful and sensitive database,” said Florida Department of Law Enforcement Commissioner Gerald Bailey. “I applaud the Surgeon General's enhanced review of protocols to ensure the confidentiality and privacy of our citizens.”

The Florida Department of Health works to protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county, & community efforts.

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