



POSITION PAPER **No. 10/213th Legislature** **(2008-09)**

ISSUE:

Provides prescriber or health care facility with discretion to number prescription blank forms consecutively. Currently consecutive numbering of the forms is required.

BILL NO.

S-1767 (Sarlo)

A-3613 (Pou/Vas/Ramos)

NCADD-NJ POSITION:

NCADD-New Jersey opposes S-1767/A-3613.

Numbering prescription blank forms consecutively is one method used to track prescriptions to identify and prevent forgeries, diversion, copying, and counterfeit forms. This requirement for consecutive numbering was part of the law that created a Prescription Monitoring Program in the Division of Consumer Affairs in the Department of Law and Public Safety to monitor controlled dangerous substances dispensed in most outpatient settings in the state, and to combat the misuse of prescription drugs.

Requiring that the prescription blanks be numbered consecutively makes tampering and counterfeiting more difficult. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Association (SAMHSA) has established that numbering the prescription blanks so missing blanks may be detected is an effective means of reducing prescription forgeries.

Abuse of prescription drugs is a serious epidemic nationwide and in New Jersey. They are the third most used type of drugs among adults and young adults, the second most used drugs among teens, and the most used drugs, period, by 13 to 14 year olds. More

people began misusing pain pills than any other drug in 2006.

The number of Americans who misuse controlled prescription drugs nearly doubled from 1992 to 2003, from 7.8 million to 15.1 million, and misuse of drugs among teens more than tripled during that period. The number of 12 to 17 year olds who misused controlled prescription drugs jumped 212 percent and the number of adults misusing such drugs climbed 81 percent.

The 15.1 million Americans misusing controlled prescription drugs exceed the combined number misusing cocaine (5.9 million), hallucinogens (4.0 million), inhalants (2.1 million) and heroin (.3 million). From 1992 to 2003, misuse of controlled prescription drugs grew at a rate twice that of marijuana use; five times that of cocaine use; 60 times that of heroin use.

Although high school drug use is down across the country, in the past 10 years the rate of prescription drug abuse among teens has risen steadily. From 1992 to 2002, the increase in new prescription drug misusers among 12 to 17 year olds was 542 percent. In fact, more teens misuse prescription drugs than any illicit drug except marijuana, and among 13 and 14 year olds, prescription drugs are the drug of choice. By 2005, nearly one in five 12 to 17 year olds (19 percent or 4.5 million) reported misusing medications not prescribed to him or her. Despite these epidemic numbers, about 40 percent of 12th graders say that painkillers are fairly or very easy to get and more than half say the same of stimulants.

In New Jersey in 2004, 283,000 individuals 12 years of age or older misused nonmedical pain reliever drugs, of these users, 45,000 were youths 12 to 17 years of age, 91,000 were young adults 18 to 25 years of age, and 147,000 were adults 26 years of age or older.



PUBLIC POLICY & INFORMATION

Promoting Addiction Prevention, Treatment and Recovery Through Advocacy and Education

The consequences of prescription drug abuse can be fatal. Yet over half of teens (56 percent or 12.8 million) do not see great risk in trying prescription pain relievers without a doctor's prescription. In 2002, controlled prescription drugs were implicated in 29.9 percent of drug-related emergency room deaths and were implicated in at least 23 percent of drug-related emergency department admissions. Between 1994 and 2002, prescription drug-related emergency room mentions increased by nearly 80 percent, far more than for any other illegal drug.

Although there are several ways to divert prescription drugs for abuse, of the 979 physicians surveyed by The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) at Columbia, 69.4 percent stated that misuse was a result of forged or altered prescriptions. Therefore, continuing to require prescribers and health care facilities to number prescription blank forms consecutively is a simple preventative measure to combat prescription drug misuse in New Jersey.

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Resources

The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse (CASA) at Columbia 2004

National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NS-DUH), 2005, 2007

Tracking Report from the Partnership for Drug Free America 2005, 2007

Substance Abuse Mental Health Association (SAMHSA) Module 19 Prescription Drug Abuse