Florida launched its prescription drug monitoring program yesterday—a significant development that was applauded by other state leaders like Kentucky's Governor Steve Beshear. A prescription drug monitoring program (PDMP) or prescription drug monitoring program (PMP) functions as an online database that various officials can access to see an individual's prescription history. Keeping a record of prescription history could, for example, help a pharmacist identify someone who was trying to get prescriptions for pain relief filled multiple times at different pharmacies—thus indicating drug abuse by that person and/or an intent to sell the drugs.

The reason Florida's launch of its PDMP is particularly noteworthy is because, as The New York Times explains,

"Florida has long been the nation’s center of the illegal sale of prescription drugs: Doctors here bought 89 percent of all the Oxycodone sold in the country last year. At its peak, so many out-of-staters flocked to Florida to buy drugs at more than 1,000 pain clinics that the state earned the nickname 'Oxy Express.'"

Florida also launches its PDMP program at the same time many other states are working together to connect their existing PDMP systems via interstate hubs, thus allowing states to further monitor abuse beyond their own borders. Given Florida's historical status as a source for prescription drugs found in other states, the launch of its program and potential integration into an interstate system could significantly disrupt drug abuse and diversion on a national level.

The Council of State Governments has been assisting state leaders on this multi-state front through its Prescription Monitoring Program Compact. Other efforts have included the Prescription Monitoring Information Exchange (PMIX) and the NABP PMP Interconnect. Senator Vicki Schmidt of Kansas provides her thoughts on PMP's and the PMP Compact in the video below:
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