Telling numbers illustrate the need for action with regard to prescription drug abuse.

- The rate of prescription drug abuse in Kentucky has doubled among men and tripled among women in the past 10 years.
- Florida estimates suggest as many as seven people overdose daily on prescription drugs.
- Deaths from prescription drug overdoses are the leading cause of accidental death in 17 states.
- Nearly one-third of all people age 12 and older who abuse drugs for the first time abuse prescription drugs.

Kansas Senate Assistant Majority Leader Vicki Schmidt, a registered pharmacist, said that final statistic is startling.


The drugs at the center of abuse fall in Schedules II-V and include such things as hydrocodone, Lortab, Demerol and Adderall, she said.

“In the U.S., we consume about 95 percent of the hydrocodone worldwide,” she said.

While 40 states have operational prescription monitoring programs, which allow pharmacists and health providers to monitor prescription dispensation, the need for interstate cooperation has become more evident, Schmidt said.

Kansas, for example, is home to the metropolitan area in Kansas City, which straddles the Kansas and Missouri state lines, and where, she said, “it would be great to share that information.”

The interstate compact, which is being introduced in state legislatures, is one option to allow states to share such information.

Rick Masters, legal counsel for the National Center for Interstate Compacts, said the compact would provide an enforceable means of interstate cooperation that other options, such as memoranda of understanding, might not provide.

“It allows states to achieve uniformity without the necessity of federal intervention,” he said.
The proposed compact has been in development since 2010 and included state government officials and external stakeholders in the development process.

Masters stressed it is one viable option available to the states.

“The goal here was to provide states with the tools necessary, and sustainable, to govern and enforce data exchange about prescription drugs so the abuse of these prescriptions can be effectively monitored,” he said. “It is a state-driven solution.”

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