



July 9, 2021

Dear Governor Abbott, Lieutenant Governor Patrick and Speaker Phelan:

On behalf of the organizations listed below, and in light of the Comptroller's recent revised revenue estimate, we respectfully request that during the current Special Legislative Session the state appropriate \$5.4 million over the biennium to fund the Texas State Board of Pharmacy's (TSBP) exceptional item request related to the Prescription Monitoring Program (PMP). It is critical that these funds be appropriated before September 1, 2021, to prevent any PMP usage interruptions.

To increase utilization of the PMP and help combat the opioid crisis, the Legislature mandated all prescribers and dispensers (except veterinarians) to check a patient's prescription history in the PMP before prescribing or dispensing an opioid, barbiturate, benzodiazepine, or carisoprodol, and mandated pharmacists to report all dispensed controlled substances records to the PMP no later than the next business day after the prescription is filled. The mandate is meeting its intended effect by reducing doctor shopping behavior as indicated by the reduction of TSBP's 5-5-5 threshold alerts; indication to a provider of when a patient receives five or more controlled substance prescriptions, written by five prescribers, and had all the prescriptions filled at five or more pharmacies.<sup>1</sup> As of August 31, 2020, 88.9% of pharmacists, 72.2% of physician assistants and 69.6% of physicians in Texas were registered PMP users. This equated to 59 million user searches of the PMP in Fiscal Year 2020<sup>2</sup>, thus assisting providers in making medically appropriate prescribing and dispensing decisions.

To assist providers in meeting the mandate, the 86th Legislature appropriated general revenue in the 2019 Supplemental Appropriations bill (S.B. 500) to fund the three items that were requested by the TSBP during the Regular Session as an exceptional item for the 2022 - 2023 biennium:

1. Integration of the PMP in electronic health record systems (EHR): \$2.1 million annually  
Providing integration of the PMP into prescribers' and dispensers' EHR dramatically increases the efficiency with which providers have access to the PMP. Without integration, providers would be required to operate multiple systems when dispensing and/or prescribing of controlled substances is involved with patient care, creating clinical workflow issues. **Of the 59 million provider PMP searches in fiscal year 2020, 48.5 million (82%) of those were searches from an integrated EHR.**<sup>3</sup>
2. NarxCare: \$400,750 annually  
NarxCare is a PMP enhancement that analyzes patient health history to provide dispensers and prescribers with a patient addiction risk score and an interactive visualization of usage patterns to help

<sup>1</sup> Joint Interim Committee on Prescribing & Dispensing Controlled Substances Interim Report to the 86<sup>th</sup> Legislature

<sup>2</sup> TSBP's Fiscal Year 2020 PMP Data One Pager

<sup>3</sup> TSBP's Fiscal Year 2020 PMP Data One Pager

identify risk. NarxCare also allows for provider- to-provider messaging within the PMP so patient care notes can be shared electronically.

3. Clinical Alerts: \$20,000 annually

Clinical alerts provide notifications within the PMP to prescribers and dispensers when patients meet certain controlled substances usage thresholds. For example, a provider would receive an automatic alert from the PMP if a patient received both an opioid and a benzodiazepine, a drug mixture that can increase the likelihood of an overdose.

We look forward to working with you on our continued efforts to address the ongoing opioid crisis. It is paramount that these items remain funded during the 2022 – 2023 biennium to build on the progress and successes of the state's PMP. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

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Texas e-Health Alliance

cc

The Honorable Jane Nelson  
The Honorable Greg Bonnen