

ONE Rx provides North Dakota pharmacists opportunity to help stem opioid misuse and accidental overdose

The pharmacy profession in North Dakota has a reputation for being progressive and a national leader, according to Mark Hardy, executive director of the North Dakota Board of Pharmacy.

The North Dakota Pharmacists Association, North Dakota Board of Pharmacy, NDSU School of Pharmacy and North Dakota Department of Human Services announced a new program that moves opioid misuse and overdose prevention to the initial patient encounter.



ONE Rx (Opioid and Naloxone Education) is an innovative approach to screen and educate patients who receive prescribed opioid medications at participating community pharmacies in the state of North Dakota. Addressing opioid use prior to misuse is a cornerstone to help communities. In addition, through patient screening, pharmacists can complete a thorough assessment if a patient is more likely to experience an accidental overdose, even if taking the medication as prescribed.

“Community pharmacists have a unique relationship with their patients and are often the most easily accessible health professionals in their communities,” said Mike Schwab, executive vice president of the North Dakota Pharmacists Association. “This program will provide tools to assist community pharmacists to do even more to ensure safe use of opioids.”

Benefits for participating pharmacies

With ONE Rx, participating pharmacies receive:

- 3 hours of free continuing education for each pharmacist
- Access to outcomes data to help serve their patients
- \$500 incentive upon completion of the first 25 patients per pharmacy through the program, and
- Depending on availability, an additional financial reward for completing ONE Rx with a predetermined number of patients

“We know that some people do need prescribed opioids in some circumstances and many are not always aware of the impact the prescribed drugs can have,” said Hardy. “ONE Rx is designed to equip pharmacists with tools to screen for opioid use disorder, identify patient needs and provide counseling and resources to safely use prescribed opioids.”

How to participate in ONE Rx

Register for in-person training at www.nodakpharmacy.com/onerx
Or take online training after Oct. 1 at www.nodakpharmacy.com/onerx

The free three-hour training sessions will be offered in:

- Fargo, October 3, 2018, 5:30-8:30 p.m.
- Bismarck, October 12, 2018, 5:30-8:30 p.m.
- Minot, October 13 2018, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.

Participating community pharmacies also will be provided a toolkit with the resources they need to deliver this program of care. The program covers the science of addiction, opioid use and community support services.



Mike Schwab, executive vice president of the North Dakota Pharmacists Association, addresses a news conference about the ONE Rx program and the role of pharmacists in helping their communities stem the tide of opioid misuse. Also pictured, L-R are: Elizabeth Skoy, associate professor, NDSU School of Pharmacy; North Dakota Attorney General Wayne Stenehjem; Mark Hardy, executive director, North Dakota Board of Pharmacy; and Laura Anderson, assistant director, Behavioral Health Division, North Dakota Department of Human Services.

This continuing education program will educate pharmacists in North Dakota on a method to screen patients receiving opioids, using the Opioid Risk Tool (ORT). The tool assists in identifying individuals who may be at higher risk of opioid misuse. In addition, the pharmacist will collect patient information to also determine if the patient is at risk for accidental overdose. Pharmacists who are trained to administer the tool can then provide patient care and counseling as needed.

This program also will deliver education on the use of naloxone to reverse the effects of an opioid overdose. NDSU School of Pharmacy faculty members Mark Strand, PhD; Heidi Eukel, PharmD; Amy Werremeyer, PharmD; and Elizabeth Skoy, PharmD; along with Jayme Steig, PharmD, of Quality Health Associates of North Dakota will be among those providing the continuing education.

“We commend the partners in this program for recognizing the key role community pharmacists can play in preventing opioid misuse, and for ensuring those who fill opioid prescriptions have the education and training they need to properly screen patients and identify those who may be at higher risk,” said Gov. Doug Burgum. “The state is pleased to participate in this program through the North Dakota Department of Human Services as another way of addressing the opioid crisis on the front end and preventing the misuse and overdoses that are devastating families and communities across North Dakota and the nation.”

The project is the effort of multiple partners to proactively help patients and communities. Grants totaling \$150,648 from the North Dakota Department of Human Services, the Alex Stern Family Foundation and the Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Dakota Caring Foundation make the program possible.

The FM Area Foundation and North Dakota Board of Pharmacy also provided initial seed funding for an earlier pilot project.

In the pilot program, 26 percent of patients identified at some risk of opioid misuse. Approximately 30 percent of patients in the pilot study identified at risk of accidental overdose.

“This continuing education program for pharmacists at community pharmacies in North Dakota moves opioid misuse and overdose prevention to the initial patient encounter,” said Dr. Elizabeth Skoy, associate professor in the NDSU School of Pharmacy. “We are grateful to these organizations and agencies that have provided funding to make this continuing education available for community pharmacists in the state.”