



GARY R. HERBERT
Governor

SPENCER J. COX
Lieutenant Governor

State of Utah Department of Commerce

Division of Occupational and Professional Licensing

FRANCINE A. GIANI
Executive Director

MARK B. STEINAGEL
Division Director

Friday, August 31, 2018

Senator Allen M Christensen, Senate Chair
Representative Paul Ray, House Chair
Social Services Appropriations Subcommittee
Utah State Legislature

Subject: Utah Department of Commerce, Division of Occupational and Professional Licensing (DOPL) Efforts in the Opioid Crisis

Chairs, Christensen and Ray,

Your staff asked us to participate in your subcommittee meeting September 17th in Price, Utah addressing the opioid crisis and our agency's efforts in addressing it. Thank you for adding your efforts and the authority of your committee to this serious issue.

Your staff also asked us to answer two questions:

- 1. What is your organization doing to address the provider/supply side of opioids? What suggestions does your organization have (if any) to address the supply side of opioids?**
- 2. What is your organization doing to address the demand/user side of opioids? What suggestions does your organization have (if any) to address the user side of opioids?**

Below I will summarize our efforts on this important issue. Since we have worked with other legislative committees and executive branch coalitions, we do not have any suggestions at this time. You will see that our efforts are not organized by whether they affect the supply side or demand side, but I believe that most of our current efforts focus on the supply side:

Executive Director Francine Giani directed the Utah Department of Commerce to establish a SUCCESS + goal targeting the opioid crisis. The Department set a goal to reduce opioid related deaths and overdoses by reducing the supply of prescription opioids through five strategies, some of which are highlighted below:

Education of and Outreach to Health Care Providers:

Numerous courses on appropriately utilizing the Controlled Substance Database for authorized users and proper prescribing guidelines have been provided.

The Utah Department of Commerce has collaborated with the Utah Department of Health and other state agencies on public awareness campaigns, including Stop the Opidemic and Talk to Your Pharmacist

Per House Bill 127 from the 2018 General Legislative Session, DOPL recently hired an Academic Detailing Specialist, who will offer education to controlled substance prescribers that are prescribing outside of established prescribing guidelines.

Utah Controlled Substance Database (CSD): The CSD has been, and continues to be, updated to increase search speeds for practitioners and better assist them in their clinical decisions:

Last spring, we released the new CSD and four new servers, thanks to the help of some interested legislators and appropriations from the Legislature. In fact, the need for the enhanced system and new servers was identified by legislators who use the CSD.

In November 2017, a Patient Dashboard was added to give prescribers and dispensers four quick patient alerts when a potential problem exists with a patient; three state agencies worked collaboratively on this effort (Commerce, Health, and Technology Services)

In 2019, a Prescriber Dashboard will be released for prescribers to assess and compare their prescribing behavior; four state agencies are working collaboratively on this effort (Commerce, Health, Technology Services, and Human Services)

Enforcement: While our first effort is always to educate, those health care practitioners who harm patients and their families through reckless prescribing lose their license or are criminally pursued. In 2017 we effected dozens of administrative and criminal cases.

Collaboration among Stakeholders: The Utah Departments of Health, Commerce, Human Services, and Public Safety, along with local, federal, and nongovernmental agencies have long coordinated legislation and other efforts addressing the opioid crisis through the Utah Coalition for Opioid Overdose Prevention (UCOOP) and various other efforts and initiatives.

We are starting to see improvements/outcomes move in a positive direction, but we have more work to do to significantly reduce the number of overdose deaths in Utah and positively influence health outcomes. As long as there are overdoses, our efforts will not cease.

Suggestions: At this time we have no suggestions as we are actively working to implement each of the efforts above. We continue to work with the Utah Attorney General's Office as a party in an opioid lawsuit against manufacturers and distributors of opioids. We also continue to work regularly with the UCOOP to identify additional legal and resource needs.

I hope this letter addresses your questions. Feel free to contact me if you have further needs.

Sincerely,

Mark Steinagel
Division Director, DOPL