

Feds Look to Cut Prescription Drug Abuse with Health IT

Brian Heaton | June 22, 2012



The U.S. government is using Indiana and Ohio as test beds to determine the usefulness of [health IT](#) in the battle against prescription drug abuse.

The Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology on Thursday, June 21, announced a pair of pilot programs that will improve real-time access to prescription drug monitoring programs (PDMP) for health-care providers. PDMPs are [statewide electronic databases](#) that contain drug prescribing and dispensing data submitted by doctors and pharmacies.

“The overall goal of all our pilot tests is to give health-care providers the data that they need to make the best prescribing decisions that they can,” said Kate Tipping, a policy analyst with the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology, in an email to Government Technology. “PDMP data is a valuable tool in combating prescription drug abuse, but it becomes even more valuable when it is integrated with providers’ day-to-day workflows.”

Both pilot programs are being funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology is managing the overall project in conjunction with SAMHSA,

the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Office of National Drug Control Policy.

Indiana's pilot project will center on emergency department staff viewing a patient's controlled substance history through the Regenstrief Medical Record System, a care management platform. The platform is used by Wishard Health Services, a community health system in Indianapolis, and other hospitals.

Tipping said the Indiana project is meant to demonstrate a "deep technical integration" with the [Indiana Scheduled Prescription Electronic Collection and Tracking Program](#) (INSPECT), using the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy's Prescription Monitoring Program InterConnect, an interstate hub that allows transfer of prescription monitoring program data across state lines to authorized users.

"If we are successful there, others can follow, using our documentation as a guide," Tipping wrote, regarding Indiana. "Other hospitals can connect with the health information exchange (HIE), and other HIEs can connect with INSPECT to add PDMP access to their capabilities."

Ohio's pilot is a little different. The state will test the impact of having a drug risk indicator embedded in electronic health records. The idea is to evaluate how that function affects clinical decision-making.

The Springfield Center for Family Medicine, Eagle Software Corp., the state of Ohio and MITRE — a nonprofit that devotes its skill in IT and engineering to various sponsored projects — are partnering on the Ohio project.

Tipping added that while the Ohio pilot program is integrating the Springfield Center for Family Medicine's electronic health record system with the Ohio Automated Rx Reporting System, providers can still choose to access the prescription drug monitoring program using an existing Web user interface if they don't have an electronic health record.

<http://www.govtech.com/health/Feds-Prescription-Drug-Abuse-Health-IT.html>