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Michigan Distributes Pain Management Guide to Health Professionals

Governor Jennifer Granholm has officially recognized September as National Pain Awareness Month. In recognition of National Pain Awareness Month, the Michigan Department of Community Health is distributing a booklet on prescribing opioid medications to the approximately 33,500 physicians and residents, 3,000 physician's assistants, 5,500 advance practice nurses, 6,500 dentists, and 9,500 pharmacists who are currently licensed and practicing in Michigan.

The booklet, *Responsible Opioid Prescribing: A Guide for Michigan Physicians*, is a state-customized version of a booklet published through the Federation of State Medical Boards, and represents the largest statewide distribution of this booklet in the nation.

The purpose of the booklet is to offer physicians (and other health professionals) concise and effective strategies for improving patient care around pain while at the same time reducing the risk of addiction, abuse, and diversion.

Dr. Greg Holzman, chief medical executive of the Michigan Department of Community Health, acknowledges that medical conditions involving pain impact many citizens within our state's population, and believes the booklet will give clear guidance to physicians and other health professionals on how to improve the medical practice of pain management and opioid prescribing in Michigan.

"The distribution of this booklet sends a strong message from the Michigan Department of Community Health that appropriate, safe, and effective pain management is an important part of providing good patient care," Holzman said. "At the same time, when opioids are identified as appropriate for the treatment of pain, health professionals have a responsibility to manage and reduce the risks associated with opioid prescribing."

The distribution of this booklet is part of the Pain Management and Palliative Care Program established in 2008 within the Bureau of Health Professions. The program conducted both a public survey and a physician survey in 2009 to assess knowledge, attitudes and practices around pain management.

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“Michigan is serious about improving pain management,” said Janet Olszewski, director of the MDCH. “Our public and professional pain management surveys will help us to identify and implement appropriate strategies to improve pain management in our state, and will serve as baseline data to assess the impact of these strategies over the next few years.”

A number of national and state studies have suggested that improving pain management not only improves the quality of life and health care outcomes, but it can also significantly reduce health care costs. For more information about Michigan's efforts to improve pain management, visit the State of Michigan website at www.michigan.gov/pm or call the Bureau of Health Professions, Professional Practice Section at (517) 335-3294.

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