

Health provider awareness can curb prescription drug abuse, public health study shows

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Increasing health care providers' level of concern about prescription drug abuse in their communities may be an effective public health tool in

fighting America's prescription drug abuse epidemic, according to a study by researchers from the School of Public Health and the Department of Sociology at Georgia State University.

The researchers found concern about prescription drug abuse may affect providers' practices.

"Our research suggests that a number of [health care providers](#) already have voluntarily begun to change their prescribing and dispensing practices in ways that may be reducing the supply of scheduled prescriptions in communities," the researchers said.

The study results are published in the *Pain Physician* journal in a report titled "Concern about the Expanding Prescription Drug Epidemic: A Survey of Licensed Prescribers and Dispensers." The study's lead author is Dr. Eric Wright, a professor with appointments in Health Management & Policy and Sociology at Georgia State.

Prescription [drug abuse](#) is an epidemic in the United States, posing the greatest risk to white men and rural residents, according to the report. The cost associated with abuse of opioids—one kind of prescription pain medication—reached nearly \$56 million in 2007 and has likely increased, the report noted.

The researchers surveyed nearly 6,000 doctors, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, dentists and pharmacists in Indiana about their views and practices related to addictive [prescription drugs](#). The majority of those surveyed indicated they were very concerned about community [prescription drug abuse](#), but a minority of responders—mainly dentists—indicated they were relatively unconcerned, the researchers found.

"This research underscores the critical importance of engaging health

care providers fully in public health efforts to reverse the course of the prescription drug epidemic," the report concluded.

More information: Concern about the Expanding Prescription Drug Epidemic: A Survey of Licensed Prescribers and Dispensers.

[www.painphysicianjournal.com/c ... racts?article=MjQ5NQ%3D%3D&journal=93](http://www.painphysicianjournal.com/c...racts?article=MjQ5NQ%3D%3D&journal=93)

Provided by Georgia State University

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