



Alabama Doctors Partner with AMA to Fight Opioid Epidemic

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The Medical Association of the State of Alabama and the American Medical Association (AMA) announced today a partnership to develop and distribute a statewide educational toolbox designed to help reverse the state’s opioid epidemic. Alabama and Rhode Island are the first two states partnering in this pilot program with the AMA.

“To bring a halt to this devastating opioid epidemic, physicians must remain committed to leading this fight – to enhancing their education and to using all tools at their disposal to help treat patients with pain and opioid use disorders as well as ensuring comprehensive treatment with non-pharmacologic therapies when appropriate,” said Patrice A. Harris, M.D., the chair of the AMA Board of Trustees and the chair of the AMA’s Task Force to Reduce Opioid Abuse.

In 2013, the Medical Association of the State of Alabama helped pass legislation to reduce prescription drug abuse and diversion. That legislation resulted in Alabama having the largest decrease in the Southeast – the third-largest in the nation regarding use of the most highly addictive prescription drugs.

“Alabama’s physicians recognize we have a serious prescription drug problem in our state,” said Medical Association President David Herrick, M.D., of Montgomery. “We have made great strides in providing better education on the dangers of prescription drug abuse to our fellow physicians and to our patients through our *Smart & Safe* drug abuse awareness campaign. But there is much more work to be done. Partnering with the American Medical Association will help us to bring even more awareness as we fight Alabama’s prescription drug abuse epidemic together.”

The pilot program will build a toolbox – available online and in print – that incorporates the best information from the AMA, the Medical Association and Alabama’s health officials. It will be provided to physicians and other health care professionals with key data, valuable resources, and practice-specific recommendations they need to enhance their decision-making when caring for patients suffering from chronic or acute pain and opioid use disorders, as well as for patients needing overdose prevention education.

The toolbox will be released in September, and the Medical Association and the AMA and will work together to distribute it throughout Alabama.

The AMA was awarded funding through the Prescriber Clinical Support System for Opioid Therapies, funded by the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and administered by the American Academy of Addiction Psychiatry.

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