

**Charles D. Baker**  
Governor

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Lieutenant Governor



**Marylou Sudders**  
Secretary

**Monica Bharel, MD, MPH**  
Commissioner

**Data Brief from the  
Office of Prescription Monitoring  
and Drug Control Program**

**November 2015**



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Executive Office of Health and Human Services  
Department of Public Health  
Bureau of Health Care Safety and Quality  
99 Chauncy Street, Boston, MA 02111



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November 4, 2015

Steven T. James  
House Clerk  
State House Room 145  
Boston, MA 02133

William F. Welch  
Senate Clerk  
State House Room 335  
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Mr. Clerk,

Pursuant to item 4510-0616 of section 2 of chapter 46 of the acts of 2015, please find enclosed a report from the Department of Public Health, Office of Prescription Monitoring and Drug Control.

Sincerely,

Monica Bharel, MD, MPH  
Commissioner, Department of Public Health

## **Legislative Mandate**

The following report is hereby issued pursuant to item 4510-0616 of section 2 of chapter 46 of the acts of 2015 (FY16 GAA), which requires the following:

“not later than October 1, 2015, the department of public health shall report to the joint committee on mental health and substance abuse and the house and senate committees on ways and means on the implementation of chapter 244 of the acts of 2012, which shall include, but not be limited to: (i) the total number of practitioners registered in the prescription drug monitoring program; (ii) the total number of thefts or losses of controlled substances that have been reported; and (iii) the total number of schedule II controlled substances prescribed by month”

## **Executive Summary**

The Prescription Monitoring Program (PMP) was established through joint regulations of the Office of Prescription Monitoring and Drug Control (OPMDC) and the Board of Registration in Pharmacy (BORP) in 1992. The OPMDC launched an online version of the PMP (MA Online PMP) in 2012, using state appropriations and grants from the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA).

Nationwide, PMPs are important tools to support safe and appropriate prescribing. Information provided by PMPs can help prescribers and pharmacists identify individuals who might be misusing or abusing controlled substance prescription drug products and therefore, might need intervention, such as a referral to treatment. Similarly, PMPs help to ensure that people who need medications are able to receive them. The Massachusetts PMP collects dispensing information on Schedule II through V controlled substances dispensed by Massachusetts pharmacies and out-of-state pharmacies that deliver to Massachusetts residents.

## **Practitioners Registered in the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program**

As noted in Table 1 below, as of August 31, 2015, 29,464 practitioners (physicians, dentists, podiatrists) have been enrolled; 5,471 mid-level practitioners (advanced practice registered nurses, physician assistants) have been enrolled and 1,032 delegates have been enrolled.

**Table 1** – Enrollment figures as of August 31, 2015

NOTE: All prescribers are required under law to enroll in the PMP.

<b>Enrollment Numbers for MA Online PMP - State Totals*</b>			
	<b>Total Enrolled</b>	<b>Total MA Providers</b>	<b>% Enrolled</b>
Practitioners <sup>1</sup>	29,464	34,779	84.7
Mid-level Prescribers <sup>2</sup>	5,471	9,266	59.0
Delegates	1,032	N/A	N/A
Dispensers	3,867	N/A	N/A
*As of August 31, 2015; N/A = not available			
<sup>1</sup> Includes physicians, dentists, and podiatrists			
<sup>2</sup> Includes advanced practice nurses and physician assistants			

### Number of Schedule II Controlled Substance Prescriptions by Month

For Calendar Year (CY) 2014, 5,799,240 Schedule II prescriptions were reported to the MA Online PMP. This averages out to approximately 483,270 Schedule II prescriptions being reported on a monthly basis. See Table 2.

For CY 2015, Year to Date (January - August), 3,639,922 Schedule II prescriptions were reported to the MA Online PMP. This averages out to approximately 454,990 Schedule II prescriptions being reported on a monthly basis. See Table 3.

**Table 2** – Schedule II Medication Prescribed by Month for Calendar Year 2014

<b>CY2014 Schedule II Prescriptions - by month</b>	
<b>Fill Month</b>	<b>Rx Count</b>
Jan, 2014	493,920
Feb, 2014	446,419
Mar, 2014	489,494
Apr, 2014	483,919
May, 2014	495,936
Jun, 2014	469,149
Jul, 2014	489,621
Aug, 2014	481,538
Sep, 2014	493,693
Oct, 2014	515,040
Nov, 2014	453,596
Dec, 2014	486,915

**Table 3 – Schedule II Medication Prescribed by Month for Calendar Jan-Aug 2015**

NOTE: The values in this table reflect the numbers of prescriptions, including refills, but do not include the solid quantities dispensed or the length of the prescriptions.

CY2015 Schedule II Prescriptions-by month (Jan-Aug)	
Fill Month	Rx Count
Jan, 2015	464,392
Feb, 2015	427,992
Mar, 2015	486,217
Apr, 2015	472,018
May, 2015	459,992
Jun, 2015	464,289
Jul, 2015	456,686
Aug, 2015	408,336

### **Total Number of Thefts or Losses of Controlled Substances Reported.**

A component of the OPMDC is the Drug Inspection Unit. This unit is comprised of three full-time Food and Drug Inspectors. This group is charged with the following duties and responsibilities:

- Inspect, survey, and investigate controlled substance registrants including but not limited to health care facilities and services, manufacturers, researchers and community programs to determine compliance with statutory provisions and regulations of the Department;
- Provide guidance and consultation to registrants and undertake regulatory actions in order to improve compliance with regulations;
- Review records, prepare reports and determine appropriate action to resolve problems;
- Initiate enforcement proceedings in cases of noncompliance; obtain evidence and testify at administrative, civil, and criminal proceedings;
- Coordinate activities with other states, federal, and local agencies; develop and provide technical assistance and conduct joint investigations;
- Conduct investigations of registrant's response to reports of diversion of controlled substances to determine if registrant has proper drug accountability and security procedures; and,
- Conduct routine inspections and re-inspections of registrants to ensure compliance with regulations governing security and accountability of controlled substances.

For CY 2014 there were 751 instances of drug loss or tempering reported to the inspection unit, and for YTD CY 2015 through August 31, 2015, there have been 863 instances of drug loss or tampering submitted to the inspection unit.

### **Conclusion**

The Department of Public Health's Bureau of Health Care Safety and Quality, and the Office of Prescription Monitoring and Drug Control wish to thank the Legislature for its support of the Prescription Monitoring Program. Legislative support has been instrumental in achieving significant improvements in the administration, operations and services of OPMDC and in ensuring that the PMP is able to fulfill its important mission of protecting the health and safety of patients in the Commonwealth.