



MAG Fact Sheet

Prescription Drug Abuse

The Medical Association of Georgia and the Medical Association of Georgia Foundation have taken an active role in addressing the prescription drug epidemic for a number of years.

One of the MAG Foundation's key programs is the 'Think About It' campaign to reduce prescription drug abuse in the state. Since it established the 'Think About It' campaign in 2011, the MAG Foundation has...

- Funded 18 prescription drug disposal boxes, which allows Georgians to dispose of their unneeded or expired prescription drugs in safe and anonymous and secure manner.
- Distributed more than one million educational leaflets at pharmacies, hospitals and medical practices in the state. The leaflets encourage Georgians to 1) only take their medicine as prescribed and 2) not share their medicine and 3) store their medicine in a safe and secure place and 4) properly dispose of any unused medicine.
- Given presentations at more than 50 town halls and 20 physician education events.
- Established social media and/or other educational campaigns on 10 college campuses as part of its 'Higher Education TAKE-BACK Initiative.'

The MAG Foundation is also managing 'Project DAN' (Deaths Avoided by Naloxone). In addition to an integrated communications campaign to raise awareness in the community, Project DAN has provided first responders in 13 counties in Northeast Georgia with more than 1,300 doses of naloxone. Naloxone can be used to save patients who are suffering from a drug overdose. This effort has already been credited with saving 18 lives in northeast Georgia.

The MAG Foundation offered a continuing medical education activity for physicians that addressed opioid abuse and promoted good prescribing practices.

MAG is encouraging physicians to register for Georgia's Prescription Drug Monitoring Program, which helps control the abuse of controlled substances. It is also worth noting that MAG has been a leading advocate for funding the PDMP in the state.

MAG has addressed the opioid drug abuse issue on two occasions on the 'Top Docs Radio' program that it sponsors on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month.

MAG supports the American Medical Association's efforts to "call on physicians to re-examine their prescribing practices to help reverse the epidemic."

P. Tennent Slack, M.D., who practices interventional pain medicine with the Northeast Georgia Physicians Group in Gainesville and who is the clinical co-chair of the MAG Foundation's "Think About It" campaign explains that, "Although there is an abundance of alarming statistical data related to the prescription opioid overdose problem, the drivers of the problem are complex and necessitate thoughtful and balanced solutions. Medical professionals must continue to formulate interventions which help reduce the over-prescribing of opioids while at the same time recognizing the importance of opioids as therapeutic drugs which relieve suffering and help maintain quality of life and function for millions of Americans. Furthermore, we need to continue to develop and support avenues to opioid addiction treatment and naloxone-based overdose rescue treatments."

While acknowledging that "much more work remains to reverse the nation's opioid epidemic," the American Medical Association (AMA) reports that...

- Every state in the nation saw a reduction in opioid prescribing in 2015 – an overall 10.6 percent decrease nationally.
- From 2012 to 2016 there has been an 81 percent increase in physicians certified to treat substance use disorders – more than 33,000 across all 50 states.
- According to the CDC, 15 states saw reductions in the numbers of people dying in 2014 compared to 2013 due to drug overdoses.
- AMA research based on responses from more than 40 states found that state-based PDMP were checked nearly 85 million times in 2015—a 40 percent increase over 2014. Increases were seen in states with and without mandates to use a PDMP.
- An AMA survey found that nearly 50,000 CME courses that are related to opioid prescribing, pain management, or other related areas have been accessed and/or completed by physicians since October 2015.

Go to <http://www.rxdrugabuse.org/> for details on the MAG Foundation's campaign to reduce prescription drug abuse in Georgia.

With more than 7,800 members, MAG is the leading voice for the medical profession in Georgia. MAG represents physicians in every specialty and practice setting in the state – and MAG membership has increased by more than 35 percent since 2010. Go to www.mag.org for additional information. Also contact Derek Norton at dnorton@mag.org or 678.303.9280.

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