



NEWS RELEASE

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ST. CHARLES COUNTY COUNCIL APPROVES PRESCRIPTION DRUG MONITORING PROGRAM

ST. CHARLES COUNTY, MO – St. Charles County took a historic step in fighting drug abuse when it passed an ordinance tonight to establish a prescription drug monitoring program (PDMP) for the County. The ordinance, requested by County Executive Steve Ehlmann and sponsored by Councilman Joe Brazil, includes all municipalities in the county and passed unanimously.

Ehlmann said, "Prescription drug abuse and misuse is dangerous to the health, safety and welfare of our County's residents. The resulting addiction often leads to the use of heroin."

Missouri is the only state to not have a statewide PDMP – a fact that encourages abusers to come here from other states. "Since the state is not taking action, we feel we need to move forward," Councilman Brazil said. "St. Charles County is very concerned about the heroin epidemic. We are doing anything and everything we can possibly do to try to get a hold on this terrible situation. Having a drug monitoring program is only one part of the solution, but it is a huge step."

The St. Charles County PDMP program will be run by the County's Department of Public Health. Those prescribing and dispensing prescription drugs will become registered users of the new system. They will be required to provide information to the Department of Public Health that could prevent "doctor shopping," the practice of visiting multiple physicians to obtain multiple prescriptions for otherwise illegal drugs. The St. Charles County information will be added to an electronic database with information from St. Louis County and the City of St. Louis.

"Utilizing the same vendor as St. Louis city and county will enable us to monitor prescription drug abuse within a larger geographical area, providing increased scrutiny throughout the region," says Ehlmann. "I urge other jurisdictions to work with St. Louis County and their vendor so that, together, we can solve this growing problem, and not just push it out to surrounding Missouri counties."

Results from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health conducted by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration revealed that prescription drug overdose deaths exceed overdose deaths from heroin and cocaine combined. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), PDMPs not only monitor for suspected abuse or diversion of drugs to illegal use, but can give a prescriber or pharmacist critical information about a patient's controlled substance abuse history. All information collected would be confidential and no information about the patient's condition requiring opioids would be collected.

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