

Prescription Drugs: Alabama to Join Growing List of States Tracking Prescriptions

David Borden, Editor; [Drug War Chronicle](#) #416; 2005-12-23; Posted: 2005-12-23

[Identifier: <http://www.doctordeluca.com/Library/WOD/PrescriptionTrackingAlabama05.htm>]

[Related resources: <http://www.doctordeluca.com/Library/LibPages/WODjournalism-lib.htm>]

[Source: <http://stopthedrugwar.org/chronicle/416/alabamatrack.shtml>]

See also:

[H.R. 3015 \[NASPER\] Continues War Against Pain Patients and Doctors](#) – Glueck and Chiak; 2004-11-23

[National Drug Control Strategy, 2005: Update](#) – The White House; 2005-02

Beginning next month, Alabama will join at least 20 other states in tracking patients' prescriptions for frequently abused drugs. The prescription drug databases are described by proponents as aimed at preventing addicts and drug dealers from "doctor shopping" to obtain large quantities of drugs such as Oxycontin or Xanax, which are popular on the black market. But they come at a time when tens of millions of Americans suffer from chronic pain and doctors are increasingly leery of prescribing large doses of popular pain relievers for fear of prosecution.

OxyContin

The state legislature passed the tracking law in 2004, and beginning in April, doctors, pharmacists, and veterinarians will be required to send information about prescriptions for certain controlled substances, including the patient's name and address, to the state database. A pilot project where doctors and pharmacists voluntarily report such information gets underway January 1.

Police will be able to access the database after presenting probable cause to the state health department. Doctors and pharmacists will be able to access the database to check up on their own patients, according to the Alabama Department of Public Health. In a concession to patient privacy advocates, disclosing database information will be a crime.

Prescriptions must be reported for all Alabama Class II to Class IV drugs (identical to Schedule II through Schedule IV drugs under the federal Controlled Substances Act). Such drugs include tranquilizers, stimulants, and opiates. Prescriptions for drugs such as antibiotics will not be tracked.

The law was pushed by Sen. Larry Means (D-Attalla), who told the Birmingham News he filed a bill after two local teens died of Oxycontin overdoses. "We're not trying to stop prescription drugs. We're trying to stop doctor shopping and over-prescribing," Means said. "I think the program will work, and we will save some lives."

According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, at least 20 states have established similar databases. They are California, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana,

Kentucky, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Nevada, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, West Virginia and Wyoming.

[END]

Addiction, Pain, & Public Health website - www.doctordeluca.com/