

Durbin calls on nation's medical community to curb over prescription of opioids

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Letters to four leading physician associations follow Senator's recent call on the pharmaceutical industry to help address nation's opioid and heroin epidemic

WASHINGTON, D.C.— U.S. Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL) today called on the leading medical associations to take responsibility for the role that doctors, dentists, and other prescribers have in curtailing the opioid epidemic by endorsing mandatory continuing

medical education programs and checking of prescription drug monitoring programs for opioid prescribers. Durbin sent letters to the heads of the American Medical Association (AMA), the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP), the American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP) and the American Dental Association (ADA).

Last month, Durbin and U.S. Representative Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) called on the President and CEO of the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA) to take financial responsibility for the drug industry's role in curtailing the opioid overdose epidemic. That letter can be found [HERE](#).

“When it comes to the opioid and heroin crisis, each stakeholder needs to do their part,” said Durbin. “The increased frequency with which prescription opioids have been prescribed in recent years has played a major factor in our nation’s escalating heroin epidemic, including an alarming increase in opioid-related emergency room visits, opioid-related treatment admissions for abuse, and opioid-related overdose deaths.”

“There are a number of reasons why we have seen such a sharp rise in the number of opioids being prescribed over the past two decades,” Durbin continued. “However, none of these factors should be an excuse for to fail to take responsibility for role in contributing to the opioid and heroin epidemic. The best way to reduce the number of Americans with an opioid addiction – which oftentimes leads to life-long opioid dependency, overdose, and death – is to ensure that patients never become addicted in the first place.”

Durbin noted in his letters that the medical associations could take a number of steps to address the opioid and heroin crisis by supporting evidence-based interventions including:

- Endorsing mandatory continuing medical education programs for opioid prescribers;
- Supporting initiatives that require physicians to check prescription drug monitoring programs before prescribing painkillers to patients; and
- Supporting increased transparency in physician prescribing practices and proper intervention for those who may be outliers.