

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 31, 2017

The Honorable Chris Christie
Governor of New Jersey
Trenton, NJ 08625

The Honorable John Carney
Governor of Delaware
Dover, DE 19901

The Honorable Tom Wolf
Governor of Pennsylvania
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Governors Christie, Carney, and Wolf,

As members of the Congressional Bipartisan Heroin Task Force, we write today to encourage your administrations to expedite your efforts to begin sharing Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP) information with the goal of preventing opioid abuse. In 2015, more than 15,000 lives were lost due to prescription drug overdoses and each day more than 1,000 individuals are treated in emergency room departments for misusing prescription opioids. We urge you to establish a Delaware Valley agreement to improve the effectiveness of PDMPs through interstate data sharing. We must do all we can to prevent further deaths from the scourge of the opioid epidemic.

Every single community has been impacted by the epidemic of opioids and countless families have lost children, spouses and parents. According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, approximately one quarter of all patients who are prescribed opioids misuse them, and 80 percent of people who use heroin first misused prescribed opioids. These numbers are a chilling reminder that the disease of addiction can hit anyone, at any time.

Each of our states has separately implemented a PDMP that allows prescribers to check and log opioid prescriptions for their patients. PDMPs reduce "doctor shopping," change prescribing behavior, decrease the time spend on drug diversion investigations, and reduce prescription drug abuse. New Jersey and Delaware have been successfully sharing prescription data for several years and enabling the exchange of data with Pennsylvania will strengthen the effectiveness of each state's PDMP. Until our states begin sharing the data from each of our programs, doctors and pharmacists cannot be sure that they are unwittingly feeding the cycle of addiction.

State PDMPs that work collaboratively in the whole region will help prevent the over-prescribing of opioids. In recognition of the importance of these programs, Congress authorized and appropriated funding for state grants to improve PDMPs.

The disease of addiction recognizes neither state nor party lines. That is why we encourage your administrations to continue to make sure that New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Delaware are working to prevent addiction. Lives are on the line.

Sincerely,



Donald Norcross
Member of Congress



Lisa Blunt Rochester
Member of Congress



Patrick Meehan
Member of Congress