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KOLSTE, NYGREN CIRCULATE BILL TO COMBAT PRESCRIPTION DRUG ABUSE

MADISON – At a press conference today, Rep. Debra Kolste (D-Janesville) and Rep. John Nygren (R-Marinette) introduced legislation to combat prescription drug abuse.

Kolste joined Nygren as he unveiled a new package of legislation aimed at preventing opiate abuse in Wisconsin. As part of his second round of “Heroin Opiate Prevention and Education (HOPE)” package, Nygren adopted one of Kolste’s proposals.

The Nygren-Kolste bill would require law enforcement officers who encounter a violation of law concerning prescription scheduled drugs to upload that information into the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP) and have the PDMP notify the physician.

“This bill is a critical step in addressing the growing concerns of prescription drug abuse,” Kolste said. “It will allow a physician to know if the patient is appropriately taking medication, if the patient experiences an unexpected reaction from taking the scheduled drug, if the patient may be a bad actor in selling the drugs, or if the physician needs to monitor his or her own prescribing habits.”

Kolste said she has been working with Nygren on the legislation since January. She and Nygren have reached out to stakeholders in law enforcement and in the medical community to make sure the bill will be effective in the fight against the scourge of opiate abuse, Kolste said.

Kolste said she first encountered a need for this legislation while attending a Rock County Sheriff’s Department heroin task force meeting. The task force raised a great deal of concern of the rising use of prescription narcotics as a part of the growing heroin epidemic. The task force stated their consternation at the number of scheduled prescription drugs found at the scenes of use and abuse such as overdoses or pill parties.

“I asked law enforcement officials on the taskforce if, as a courtesy, they informed the prescribing physician of the prescription drug abuse, and they said generally, they did not,” Kolste said. “I saw this need for feedback to the prescribing physician to try to stem some of this overuse and abuse of opioids and other scheduled drugs. I am looking forward to working with Rep. Nygren, law enforcement officials, and stakeholders in the medical community to pass this legislation and help reduce opiate abuse in Wisconsin.”

Nygren’s HOPE package also includes:

- Legislation requiring more frequent updates to the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program. Now, pharmacists and others have seven days to enter information on certain drugs, including opiates, Nygren said. The package would require updates within 24 hours of a prescription being issued.
- Legislation creating a registry for pain clinics to get data on their practices.
- Legislation creating a registry for methadone clinics.

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