



# Wisconsin State Legislature

FOR MORE INFORMATION  
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## **HOPE Agenda Targets Opioid Misuse**

More Wisconsinites died in 2013 from drug poisonings than from suicides, breast cancer, colon cancer, firearms, influenza or HIV and forty-five percent of those drug poisonings were caused by opioid pain killers, like oxycodone and hydrocodone. Opioid and other narcotic pain medication misuse also costs U.S. employers almost \$26 billion a year.

Beginning in the 2013 legislative session, the Wisconsin Legislature began looking for ways to combat the growing problem of opioid medication abuse and heroin addiction through the first part of the HOPE Agenda. HOPE stands for Heroin, Opioid, Prevention and Education. In the 2013 session, the legislature approved seven new laws. The legislature continued its work on the HOPE Agenda this session, with ten more bills signed into law. Over the course of the next few weeks, I am going to tell you about the bills we approved this session.

According to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, forty-five percent of people who reported using heroin in 2014 also reported being addicted to opioid pain medications. Given the connection between heroin use and opioid pain medication abuse, the legislature approved four bills to improve the monitoring system for certain prescription drugs. The first bill, Assembly Bill 364 shortens the time period those who dispense certain prescription drugs, like opioid pain medications, have to submit information to the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP). Under the bill, reports must be made in 24 hours, rather than seven days, was the previous requirement under state law. The new law also requires a practitioner to review a patient's PDMP record when initially prescribing these types of drugs.

Next, Assembly Bill 365 requires law enforcement to upload information into the PDMP when they encounter an inappropriate use or an infraction of the law concerning scheduled drugs and have the PDMP notify the physician. To determine the effectiveness of the PDMP, Assembly Bill 766 creates reporting requirements for the program. This data will be reviewed and evaluated by the Controlled Substances Board on a quarterly basis for the next four years.

The final bill takes a different approach to deterring opioid pain medication misuse and addiction by considering the best practices for prescribing these drugs. Assembly Bill 660 aims to improve best practices regarding prescribing controlled substances by allowing medical boards to set prescribing guidelines to help minimize the instances of overprescribing and reduce the chance of opioid misuse, abuse, and addiction.

The legislature has not been alone in working to tackle drug addiction. In 2013, the Wisconsin Department of Justice launched The Fly Effect, a multimedia campaign to educate teen, young adults and others about the dangers and consequences of heroin use. The campaign took its name from the song “There was an old woman who swallowed a fly” to show how heroin use escalates and spirals in unexpected and uncontrollable ways. The Department of Justice is continuing these efforts with Attorney General Brad Schimel's campaign launched last year: A Dose of Reality.

The federal government has recognized the need to address the heroin and opioid addiction epidemic as well with legislation approved in both the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate. One of the bills was introduced by Wisconsin’s own Congressman James Sensenbrenner. The Comprehensive Opioid Abuse Reduction Act creates a comprehensive opioid abuse reduction program at the Department of Justice and directs federal resources to the opioid addiction problem, while giving states the flexibility to attack this issue in their communities.

It is clear that there is a genuine concern about the problem of opioid pain medication and heroine addiction around the country. Efforts at the federal and state level are working to provide meaningful ways to combat misuse and addition. Keeping track of opioid pain medication and improving prescribing practices are only part of the solution. In coming weeks, watch for

information from me on additional HOPE Agenda legislation approved this session that provide oversight and improve treatment options for those struggling with addiction.

*If you have any questions about any of the information I have included or if you have suggestions on other topics or issues you would like learn more about, you may call my office toll-free at (800) 991-5541; write me at P.O. Box 7882, Madison, WI 53708; or e-mail me at: [Sen.Olsen@legis.state.wi.us](mailto:Sen.Olsen@legis.state.wi.us). You can also sign up for our newsletter at our website: <http://www.legis.state.wi.us/senate/sen14/news/index.htm>.*

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