

**American Pharmacists Association
House of Delegates – March 22-25, 2024**

NEW BUSINESS

(To be submitted and introduced by Delegates only)

Introduced by: Molly Nichols (APhA-APPM PPCA SIG)
(Name)

January 22 APhA-APPM, on behalf of the Pain, Palliative Care and Addiction SIG
(Date) (Organization)

Subject: Removal of Stigmatizing Language

Motion: To adopt the following policy statement as amended and part of the existing 2020, 2015 Integrated Nationwide Prescription Drug Monitoring Program policy

2020, 2015 Integrated Nationwide Prescription Drug Monitoring Program

6. APhA supports the use of interprofessional advisory boards, that include pharmacists, to coordinate collaborative efforts for (a) compiling, analyzing, and using prescription drug monitoring program (PDMP) data trends related to controlled substance use in a manner other than prescribed misuse, abuse, and/or fraud; (b) providing focused provider education and patient referral to treatment programs; and (c) supporting research activities on the impact of PDMPs.

Background:

The language in these policies was reviewed and updated based on the APhA Pharmacists' Role in Reducing Stigma Surrounding Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) fact sheet (link [here](#)). The goal of this NBI is to update potentially stigmatizing language in existing APhA policies to reflect currently recommend language in OUD and, more broadly, substance use disorders (SUDs). The SIG hopes that by revising this policy language we will reduce indirect exposures to, and influences of, stigma in the profession.

Impacts of Stigma (pulled from <https://nida.nih.gov/nidamed-medical-health-professionals/health-professions-education/words-matter-terms-to-use-avoid-when-talking-about-addiction>)

- Feeling stigmatized can reduce the willingness of individuals with substance use disorders (SUDs) to seek treatment.
- Stigmatizing views of people with SUD are common; this stereotyping can lead others to feel pity, fear, anger, and a desire for social distance from people with an SUD.
- Stigmatizing language can negatively influence health care provider perceptions of people with SUD, which can impact the care they provide.

Importance of Eliminating Stigma (pulled from <https://www.shatterproof.org/sites/default/files/2023-02/Shatterproof%20Addiction%20Stigma%20Index%202021%20Report%20NEW.pdf>)

- Eliminating the stigma and discrimination faced by those with SUDs has never been more important. Despite decades of action from nonprofits, healthcare providers, those with lived experience, and government agencies, stigma remains one of the largest and most persistent drivers of negative outcomes for those struggling with addiction.
- During 2020 alone, more than 93,000 people died from overdoses – the highest number in history. At the same time, more than 20 million American adults continued to suffer from the disease of addiction.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated this crisis by increasing economic instability, imposing social isolation, and reducing access to harm reduction, treatment, and recovery services. Structural racism and health inequities have worsened the impacts of the pandemic for marginalized communities, leading to increased rates of substance use and overdose. These effects will be felt for years to come, highlighting the urgent need to act.
- Addiction stigma and discrimination experienced by those with a substance use disorder independently leads to tens of thousands of preventable deaths every single year:
 - It prevents many with a SUD from ever seeking treatment;
 - It makes the public less willing to have someone with a SUD as a close personal friend, a co- worker, a neighbor, and as a family member;
 - It limits the ability of institutions and providers to offer help when someone does seek assistance by limiting resources and perpetuating harmful policies;
 - And it fuels an ongoing feeling of shame that serves as an obstacle to long-term health for those with a SUD, regardless of whether they have received treatment – entrenching addiction as a relentless and devastating public health crisis.

Current APhA Policy & Bylaws:

2020, 2015 Integrated Nationwide Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (Original Language)

1. APhA advocates for nationwide integration and uniformity of prescription drug monitoring programs (PDMP) that incorporate federal, state, and territory databases for the purpose of providing health care professionals with accurate and real-time information to assist in clinical decision making when providing patient care services related to controlled substances.
2. APhA supports pharmacist involvement in the development of uniform standards for an integrated nationwide prescription drug monitoring program (PDMP) that includes the definition of authorized registered users, documentation, reporting requirements, system response time, security of information, minimum reporting data sets, and standard transaction format.

3. APhA supports mandatory prescription drug monitoring program (PDMP) enrollment by all health care providers, mandatory reporting by all those who dispense controlled substances, and appropriate system query by registrants during the patient care process related to controlled substances.
4. APhA advocates for the development of seamless workflow integration systems that would enable consistent use of a nationwide prescription drug monitoring program (PDMP) by registrants to facilitate prospective drug review as part of the patient care process related to controlled substances.
5. APhA advocates for continuous, sustainable federal funding sources for practitioners and system operators to utilize and maintain a standardized integrated and real-time nationwide prescription drug monitoring program (PDMP).
6. APhA supports the use of interprofessional advisory boards, that include pharmacists, to coordinate collaborative efforts for (a) compiling, analyzing, and using prescription drug monitoring program (PDMP) data trends related to controlled substance and/or fraud; (b) providing focused provider education and patient referral to treatment programs; and (c) supporting research activities on the impact of PDMPs.
7. APhA supports education and training for registrants about a nationwide prescription drug monitoring program (PDMP) to ensure proper data integrity, use, and confidentiality.
(JAPhA. N55(4):364; July/August 2015) (JAPhA. 2020; 60(5): e10)

Efforts to Reduce the Stigma Associated with Mental Health Disorders or Diseases 2018

1. APhA encourages all stakeholders to develop and adopt evidence-based approaches to educate the public and all health care professionals to reduce the stigma associated with mental health diagnoses.
2. APhA supports the increased utilization of pharmacists and student pharmacists with appropriate training to actively participate in the care of patients with mental health diagnoses as members of interprofessional health care teams in all practice settings.
3. APhA supports the expansion of mental health education and training in the curriculum of all schools and colleges of pharmacy, post-graduate training, and within continuing professional development programs.
4. APhA supports the development of education and resources to address health care professional resiliency and burnout.
(JAPhA. 58(4):356; July/August 2018)

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