ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION No. 27

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2020 SESSION

Sponsored by:
Assemblyman JOHN DIMAIO
District 23 (Hunterdon, Somerset and Warren)

SYNOPSIS

Urges relevant State licensing boards to implement continuing education requirements on topics related to opioid pain medication.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.

AN ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION urging the State Boards of Medical Examiners, Dentistry, Nursing, and Pharmacy to implement continuing education requirements on topics related to opioid pain medication.

WHEREAS, Opioids are commonly prescribed for pain, and an estimated 20 percent of patients presenting to physician offices with non-cancer pain symptoms, pain-related diagnoses, or acute and chronic pain receive an opioid prescription; and

WHEREAS, In 2012, health care providers wrote 259 million prescriptions for opioid pain medication, enough for every adult in the United States to have a bottle of pain medication pills; and

WHEREAS, Rates of opioid prescribing vary greatly across states in ways that cannot be explained by the underlying health status of the country, highlighting the lack of consensus among clinicians on how to use opioid pain medication; and

WHEREAS, Evidence supports the short-term efficacy of opioids for reducing pain. However, few studies have been conducted to assess the long-term benefits of opioids for chronic pain; and

WHEREAS, In spite of this lack of research, it is estimated that between nine and 11 million adults, or approximately three to four percent of the adult population in the United States, have been prescribed long-term opioid therapy; and

WHEREAS, Despite the benefits, opioid pain medication use presents serious risks, including overdose and misuse and abuse of opioid pain medication; and

WHEREAS, The most recent Trust for America's Health report ranks New Jersey as having the 11th lowest drug overdose death rate in the United States, and initiatives to address the misuse and abuse of opioid pain medication have had a great deal of support in both New Jersey's public and private sectors; and

WHEREAS, New Jersey's approach to address the misuse and abuse of opioid pain medication includes public awareness campaigns, the adoption of medical regulations intended to improve communication between health care providers and their patients, increasing the availability of substance abuse treatment services, and the implementation of the New Jersey Prescription Monitoring Program; and

WHEREAS, The New Jersey Prescription Monitoring Program is a Statewide database for monitoring controlled dangerous substances that are dispensed in or into New Jersey by pharmacists in outpatient settings; and

WHEREAS, The purpose of the program is to help prevent and detect the diversion and abuse of pharmaceutical controlled substances by enhancing the ability of health care professionals and regulatory and law enforcement agencies in New Jersey to collect and analyze controlled substance prescription data; and

WHEREAS, New Jersey's response to the misuse and abuse of opioid pain medication is also comprised of the implementation of medical education initiatives that include prescriber education and online interactive educational modules related to the proper use of opioid pain medication; and

WHEREAS, Although health care professionals in the State are required to complete continuing professional education credits in addiction prevention and management of controlled substances, they are not required to meet continuing education requirements on topics related to opioid pain medication; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED *by the General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

1. This House respectfully urges the State Boards of Medical Examiners, Dentistry, Nursing, and Pharmacy to implement continuing education requirements for health care professionals on topics related to opioid pain medication, including responsible prescribing practices, alternatives to opioid medication for managing and treating pain, and the risks and signs of opioid misuse, abuse, and addiction; and also urges these boards to ensure that the continuing education requirements remain in effect for the next two biennial periods for the renewal of professional licenses, registrations, or certifications, unless the time period is extended by the boards, and apply to physicians, physician assistants, advance practice nurses, dentists, pharmacists, professional nurses, practical nurses, and other health care professionals with the authority to prescribe opioid pain medication and those who do not have prescribing authority but frequently interact with patients who may be prescribed opioids.

2. Copies of this resolution, as filed with the Secretary of State, shall be transmitted by the Clerk of the General Assembly to the State Boards of Medical Examiners, Dentistry, Nursing, and Pharmacy.

STATEMENT

This resolution urges the State Boards of Medical Examiners, Dentistry, Nursing, and Pharmacy to implement continuing education requirements on topics related to opioid pain medication, including responsible prescribing practices, alternatives to opioid medication for managing and treating pain, and the risks and signs of opioid misuse, abuse, and addiction.

The boards are also urged to ensure that the continuing education requirements would remain in effect for the next biennial period for the renewal of professional licenses, registrations, or certifications,

unless the time period is extended by the boards, and apply to physicians, physician assistants, advance practice nurses, dentists, pharmacists, professional nurses, practical nurses, and other health care professionals with the authority to prescribe opioid pain medication and those who do not have prescribing authority but frequently interact with patients who may be prescribed opioids.