



Lehigh County Medical Society

The mission of the Lehigh County Medical Society is to encourage physicians and healthcare professionals to have the highest moral and ethical standards; to counsel and censure them when necessary; to serve as a strong and united voice for our Lehigh County physicians, our patients and our community; to promote healthful living and well-being and to advance the highest standards of healthcare and service in our region through education, service and advocacy.

Established 1852

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The DR Bulletin

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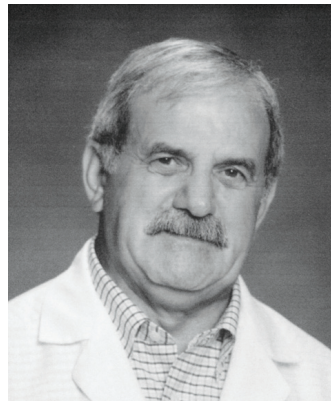
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With the presidential and general elections only weeks away I implore each of you to explore, read, and delve into each candidate's background and platforms. It is vital that we go to the polls fully informed and confident in our choice as we pull that lever. Gone are the days of lacksidatically voting along the good old party line. This election will have an impact far more reaching than the next 4 or 8 years. Changes in health care and the appointment of Supreme Court justices will affect not only us but future generations.

Regardless of whether you identify yourself as a Democrat or a Republican, liberal or conservative, you owe it to yourself to make a well-informed decision. An educated electorate helps pave the road to our country's future.

Exercise your right to vote...go to the polls! -Charles J. Scagliotti, M.D.

What Pa. Physicians Have Been Saying about State's PDMP Since Querying Began on Aug. 25

Since querying for Pennsylvania's prescription drug monitoring program (PDMP) began on Aug. 25, 2016, physicians from across the commonwealth have been sharing their questions, concerns, and suggestions on the PDMP with the Pennsylvania Medical Society (PAMED).

Several physicians have told us that the registration process was straightforward and that the system has been easy to use thus far. PAMED has also heard from some physicians who have experienced technical difficulties, have questions, or provided ideas for improvements.

On Sept. 13, 2016, PAMED President Scott Shapiro, MD, sent a letter to Pennsylvania's Department of Health (DOH) to share physician comments on the PDMP and to reaffirm PAMED's partnership with DOH to ensure the PDMP's success.

"On behalf of PAMED and its members, we remain committed to working with DOH to ensure the success of the PDMP by seeing that the required information is entered into the system and queried to help health care providers safely prescribe controlled substances and help patients get the treatment they need." Dr. Shapiro wrote.

Dr. Shapiro's letter addressed the following topics:

1. Physician issues with the PDMP—Physicians shared various technical and customer service issues, including several physicians reporting that

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The ad material is for the information and consideration of the reader. It does not necessarily represent an endorsement or recommendation by the Lehigh County Medical Society.

Manuscripts offered for publication and other correspondence should be sent to 1620 W Highland St, Allentown, PA.

The DR Bulletin is published six times a year bi-monthly, beginning in January, by the Lehigh County Medical Society.

The editorial board reserves the right to reject and/or alter submitted material before publication. All manuscripts and letters should be typed double-spaced on 8 1/2" x 11" stationary.

their registration has been listed as "pending approval"* for several weeks. A problem with integration with out-of-state dispensaries was also reported, specifically that a patient's prescription that is filled out-of-state through a mail order company is not listed in the system.

***Important Note:** If you registered for the PDMP system and your registration is still showing up as "pending approval" or something similar, it is recommended that you call the PDMP helpline for assistance with your registration. At this time, registrants are not able to go back into the system to re-register on their own. You can call the PDMP helpline at 855-572-4767.

Suggestions for changes and improvements—Recommendations include adding quick search fields on the PDMP dashboard as well as developing a mobile-friendly version of the database and/or an app.

Physician questions and requests for clarification—Common questions include:

- Are there circumstances where DOH considers a physician not to be a prescriber but rather a physician who is ordering the administration of a controlled substance that would not necessitate querying the PDMP system? Examples of possible circumstances under question include a post-operative patient who is administered pain medication, a patient who is administered pain medication in an emergency department, and an anesthesiologist who orders anesthesia to put the patient to sleep for surgical purposes.
- Whether it is permissible for prescribers and dispensers to talk to each other about a patient's prescription history if the prescriber or dispenser suspects abuse or diversion of controlled substances by the patient.
- Does DOH consider changes in dosage orders for the same controlled substance a first-time prescription requiring a new query?
- If a specialization is not listed during the PDMP registration process, is it permissible for a physician to choose the closest specialty? If not, will more specialties be added?
- What are the requirements for Department of Veteran's Affairs (VA) physicians who may be licensed by the commonwealth, but are working on federal property?
- The PDMP system is not compatible with some physicians' EMR systems or practitioner management systems. Is DOH working on these compatibility issues or will physicians be required to change their systems?
- Are prescribers allowed to prescribe if the system is down or undergoing maintenance and, if so, is there anything they must do for record-keeping purposes?

PAMED will share any responses it receives from DOH regarding the questions and concerns outlined in the letter once that information becomes available.

For answers to previous frequently asked questions, check out these PAMED articles and resources:

- "The Prescription Drug Monitoring Program: Your Prescriber Questions Answered"
[https://www.pamedsoc.org/advocate/topics/weekly-capitol-up-](https://www.pamedsoc.org/advocate/topics/weekly-capitol-up-date-blog/CapUpdateBlogSept616)

[date-blog/CapUpdateBlogSept616](https://www.pamedsoc.org/advocate/topics/weekly-capitol-up-date-blog/CapUpdateBlogSept616)

- "Are There Exemptions for Prescribers Querying the System Under the PDMP Law? A Clarification for Prescribers"

<https://www.pamedsoc.org/tools-you-can-use/topics/opioids/PDMPClarification>

- Quick Consult publication on the PDMP with information for prescribers

https://www.pamedsoc.org/PAMED_Downloads_NotPublic/Quick%20Consult/QCPDMP.pdf

Get more information on the PDMP online at www.pamedsoc.org/database and access CME you can use to address the opioid abuse crisis at www.pamedsoc.org/opioidscme.

ATTENTION Lehigh County Medical Society MEMBERS

Does your Physician Group have a Website?

Contact the Lehigh County Medical Society
and have your Website linked onto the
Lehigh County Medical Society Website.

www.lcmedsoc.org

Call: 610-437-2288

What Is a Physician's Role in Safe Harbor Provision of PA's Medical Marijuana Law?

Pennsylvania's Department of Health (DOH) Sec. Karen Murphy recently sent a letter to Pennsylvania physicians regarding the Safe Harbor Provision of the commonwealth's medical marijuana law. The Safe Harbor Provision enables a parent or guardian of a minor under 18 years of age to lawfully obtain medical marijuana from another state, U.S. territory, or any other country to be administered to a minor.

"As part of the application process for a Safe Harbor Letter, a parent, legal guardian, caregiver, or spouse must request a doctor to sign a form stating that in their medical opinion the minor has one of the serious medical conditions listed in the act," writes Sec. Murphy in the letter. She also says that physicians should be aware that marijuana is still a Schedule I controlled substance under federal law.

Get the DOH's Safe Harbor Physician Form; <http://apps.health.pa.gov/PASafeHarbor/Documents/Safe%20Harbor%20Letter%20Dr%20Form%20Final.pdf>

The form signed by the physician will only be considered as a statement that the minor in question has a serious medical condition as defined by Pennsylvania's Medical Marijuana Act. DOH will not consider it as a prescription for medical marijuana, as the physician form is just one of several requirements that must be met before an application for a Safe Harbor Letter is granted.

Physicians who wish to assist a parent, legal guardian, caregiver, or spouse in applying for a Safe Harbor Letter can

complete and sign the Safe Harbor Physician Form. Once DOH reviews and approves the form, a copy will be returned to the physician for his/her medical records.

Additional Resources

PAMED offers a series of Quick Consult publications to answer physician and patient questions on the state's Medical Marijuana Act:

- Safe Harbor Provision
- General Information
- Highlights of the Medical Marijuana Act
- Physician Information
- Upcoming Process

2015 Open Payments Data Is Now Available to Public

On June 30, 2016, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) published 2015 Open Payments data, which discloses payments and other transfers of value made to physicians and teaching hospitals by medical device manufacturers and pharmaceutical companies. The database was required by the Physician Payments Sunshine Act, a provision of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

With this release, the second full year of data is now available on CMS's Open payments website. CMS publishes payment information gathered over the course of a calendar year and updates the database in June of the following year.

The new data includes 2015 Open Payments data, as well as newly submitted and updated payment information for the 2013 and 2014 reporting periods. The records are organized into three categories: general (non-research) payments, research payment, and physician ownership and investments.

To view your data, you can use this search tool on CMS' website.

For Open Payments program year 2015, CMS reports the following:

- Health care industry manufacturers reported \$7.52 billion in payments and ownership and investment interests to physicians and teaching hospitals.
- This \$7.52 billion amount includes 11.90 million total records attributable to 618,931 physicians and 1,116 teaching hospitals.
- Payments in the three major reporting categories are \$2.60 billion in general payments; \$3.89 billion in research payments; \$1.03 billion of ownership or investment interests held by physicians or their immediate family members.

In addition to enabling the public to explore health care industry trends, the Open Payments data also provides CMS with the opportunity to analyze payments connected to drugs, biologicals, devices, and other supplies. For example, according to CMS' June 30 news release, it has determined that, for program year 2015, 2.26 percent (637,131 records) of all financial transactions between physicians and pharmaceutical companies were related to opioid medications.

From pamedsoc.org

Lehigh County Medical Society Welcomes the following New Members

Isabella U. Alkasov, MD (FM)
5848 Old Bethlehem Pike Ste 101
Center Valley PA 18034

Jill Bortz, DO (FP)
3760 Brookside Rd
Macungie PA 18062

Mark A. Conopio, MD (AN)
700 Lawn Ave
Sellersville PA 18960

Anthony John Darr, MD (GS)
Apt C 182 Dew Drop Rd
York PA 17402

Shuisen Li, DO (IM)
1200 S Cedar Crest Blvd
Allentown PA 18104

Michelle Lyman, Med. Student

Noel Bernard Martins, MD (GE)
501 Cetronia Rd # 140 Allentown PA 18104

NOTE

Members of the Lehigh County Medical Society can now view the membership roster (Physician Directory) at our website: www.lcmedsoc.org or request a Membership Roster by calling the Lehigh County Medical Society at: 610-437-2288.

REMEMBER

If you change your business or home address and/or phone or fax number, please notify the Lehigh County Medical Society. Call: 610-437-2288

LCMS is looking for members interested in becoming active on the Board of Trustees or on various committees.

Please contact our office if you are interested, 610-437-2288 or lcmedsoc@rcn.com

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The vision of the Lehigh County Medical Society is to be a relevant and influential leader in the Pennsylvania Medical Society; to unite our physicians and to empower them to deliver compassionate, ethical and evidence based healthcare of the highest quality and value to our community.

The Lehigh County Medical Society will accomplish its mission and its vision by the following:

Legislative Advocacy within our State Medical Society and our Government
Community Education within the Public Health Arena
Member Education, Collaborative Relationships and Collegiality
Service Activities for our members and our community

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