



**For Immediate Release: February 17, 2012**

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## **FSMB Announces Opioid Prescribing Initiatives**

DALLAS – The Federation of State Medical Boards (FSMB) announced today several initiatives aimed at addressing the rise of opioid abuse and related deaths in the United States, while safeguarding legitimate access to medications for patients with pain.

Among the efforts being launched by the organization, which represents the state medical boards that license and regulate physicians:

- **National partnership to better utilize health information technology related to prescribing.** The FSMB will collaborate with the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology, the Office of National Drug Control Policy, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, major pharmacy chains and other stakeholder organizations to promote the use of health-information technology to reduce prescription abuse. Under this project, the FSMB will collaborate with partner organizations to improve access to database information on prescribers and dispensers of controlled substances found in State Prescription Drug Monitoring Programs (PDMPs). The project will put an emphasis on increasing timely access to PDMP data at the point of care, point of dispensing, and in hospital emergency departments.
- **Review and update of FSMB's pain and opioid policies.** The FSMB has created a workgroup, in collaboration with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, which will bring together experts in pain management, pharmacology, psychiatry, public health, medical regulation and other disciplines to consider potential updates to FSMB policy on opioid prescribing. The review will include the FSMB's *Model Policy for the Use of Controlled Substances for the Treatment of Pain*, adopted by its House of Delegates in 2004, and its *Model Policy Guidelines for Opioid Addiction Treatment in the Medical Office*, adopted

in 2002. The workgroup will examine new scientific research and public policy on opioids as a part of its policy review.

- **Publication of an updated and revised version of its 2007 book *Responsible Opioid Prescribing: A Physician's Guide*.** An updated version of the FSMB Foundation's book, which provides prescribers with an understanding of expectations of regulators and offers pragmatic steps for adopting a risk management approach associated with any use of opioid drugs, will be published this spring. The book will offer important new material – including research on opioid prescribing that was not available in 2007 – and updated recommendations for physicians. Since publication of the first edition, the book has been widely used and supported in the medical and regulatory communities, offering a comprehensive discussion of the risks of opioid prescribing and a sound, balanced opioid-prescribing framework.

In announcing the FSMB's efforts, CEO Humayun Chaudhry, DO, FACP, said the medical community must strike a balance between efforts to reduce opioid abuse and the need to safeguard legitimate access to treatment, as recommended in the report "Vital Signs: Overdoses of Prescription Opioid Pain Relievers --- United States, 1999—2008," published last year by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

He noted that physician outreach is a critical element in that effort, citing a recent report from the Institute of Medicine (IOM) that urged health organizations to offer increased education for physicians on the treatment for pain – including better instruction in safe and effective opioid prescribing. In its report, the IOM estimated that 116 million Americans suffer from chronic pain – calling the condition a major public health problem.

"We must face these dual realities – the need to carefully manage opioid use while ensuring patients have access to needed medications," Dr. Chaudhry said. "We agree that physician education is essential in this effort, along with the use of tools currently available to address issues of opioid abuse -- such as PDMPs -- and the creation of new resources to help as we seek the right balance. We believe our multi-level advocacy initiatives will help address these issues."

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### **About the FSMB**

The FSMB is a national non-profit organization representing all medical boards within the United States and its territories that license and discipline allopathic and osteopathic physicians and, in some jurisdictions, other health care professionals. It assists these state and territorial medical boards as they go about their mandate of protecting the public's health, safety and welfare. The FSMB leads by promoting excellence in medical practice, licensure, and regulation.