

August 26, 2016

## Weekly Legislative Wrap-Up

### State of the States



Massachusetts **launched** its reworked Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP). The

system, which is easier for medical providers to navigate, will also connect to neighboring states to share prescription monitoring information, including Connecticut and New York by month's end. The improved PDMP comes less than two months before prescribers in the state will be required to consult the system before prescribing any schedule II or III drug.



The updated version of SB 1160, including legislative language from the Department of Industrial

Relations (DIR), is **scheduled** for a hearing this Thursday. The DIR issued a **press release** on SB 1160, noting the bill will save up to \$818 million for the workers' comp system. The amended bill creates faster response time for Utilization Review (UR) and Independent Medical Review (IMR) regarding prescription drug requests covered by the formulary and protects prescriptions covered by the formulary from prospective review within the first 30 days from injury.



On Thursday, the U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy, **issued** a letter to 2.3 million prescribers in America, urging them to take action on the opioid epidemic. In the letter, Dr. Murthy calls on prescribers to sign a voluntary pledge to strengthen their prescribing practices, assist in getting at-risk patients treatment, and help change the national view of addiction.



# State of the States



Pennsylvania's updated Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP)

went **live** this week. The system, which has been collecting dispensing information from pharmacies since June, will now collect information on all schedule II-IV controlled substances and require all medical providers to check the database before writing an initial controlled substance prescription. The earlier version of the PDMP only collected dispensing information regarding Schedule II drugs and was only accessible by law enforcement.



The Texas Division of Workers' Compensation **issued** proposed rules regarding attorney's fees

last week. If approved, the rules

would allow Texas workers' comp attorney's to bill up to \$200 an hour, \$50 more than they have been allowed to bill for the past 25 years. Under the rules, even with the increased amount, attorney fees cannot exceed 25% of what a claimant recovers.



The Oklahoma attorney, Bob Burke, responsible for over 20 appeals regarding the states' 2013

worker's compensation reforms, filed yet another **challenge** to the system with the state's Workers' Compensation Commission. The latest challenge filed states the legislature overstepped its authority when it limited benefits for an injured worker that aggravates a pre-existing condition. The state's opt-out program, also established with the 2013 reforms, is still awaiting a state Supreme Court ruling to determine its' constitutionality.



## Where in the U.S.A. are Jayne & Danielle?

Jayne will be in the home office next week and Danielle will be out of the office until September 6.

## Questions, Concerns, Suggestions? Let Us Know.

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## Articles of Interest

The local San Francisco NBC station is doing a three part series examining the California Worker's Compensation system. The investigation explores workers comp **coverage** for firefighters in San Jose, **delayed** medical treatments, and the state's Independent Medical Review **Process**.

# IWP

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