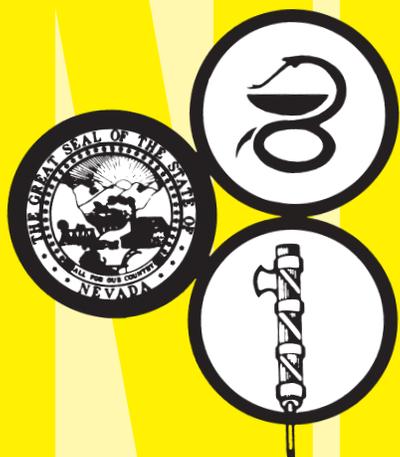


April 2009



Nevada State Board of Pharmacy

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- David Chan, RPh, Sparks.....Board Member
- Kam Ghandi, RPh, Las Vegas.....Board Member
- Chad Luebke, RPh, Las Vegas.....Board Member
- Mary Lau, Carson City.....Public Member

Recent Board Appointments

Governor Jim Gibbons has made the following appointments to the Nevada State Board of Pharmacy effective November 1, 2008:

- ◆ Keith Macdonald was appointed to a second three-year term. Keith’s invaluable institutional knowledge with the Board is most welcome given the almost total turnover of the Board this past year. The state of Nevada is fortunate to maintain his devotion to public service.
- ◆ David Chan comes to the Board with varied experiences in pharmacy ranging from positions with AARP Pharmacy Services, RxAmerica, PrecisionRx, and most currently as director of pharmacy services for Scolari’s Food and Drug. A graduate of Idaho State University in 1977, David’s work ethic and desire to ensure quality and safe pharmaceutical care to patients will serve the public well.
- ◆ Kam Ghandi, a district manager for Albertsons-Savon (Supervalu), Las Vegas, is a graduate of the University of Illinois College of Pharmacy in 1995. Kam began his career with Jewel-OSCO in the Chicago area, followed by a migration to northern California via Fort Worth, TX, with Albertsons-Savon. Kam’s desire is to serve the public in the best interest of the patient.

Sadly, long-time Board member Ray Seidlinger has reached term limits. Ray’s tenure is highlighted by his undying devotion to the patient as he continually strove to protect the public through his many decisions. Although

it will seem strange not to have Ray at the table, staff is delighted to welcome Ray as he begins his new career as a Board staff member working out of the Las Vegas office.

Equally as sad is the end of the abbreviated Board presidency of Barry Boudreaux, who has accepted a transfer to Indiana with Medco Health Solutions, Inc. A well-liked, highly respected, and extremely competent leader, Barry will be missed. We wish him the best and trust that Indiana will tolerate his outrageous neckties as we did. The Board elected Don Fey to succeed Barry as president of the Board and Leo Basch will continue as Board treasurer. Board staff wishes them the best in their endeavors.

Pharmacy Technician Advisory Committee

At the request of Board staff, the Board of Pharmacy has created a “Pharmaceutical Technician Advisory Committee” made up of pharmacy technicians from various practice arenas and parts of the state. Recognizing the paramount importance of the role provided by pharmacy technicians in the delivery of pharmaceutical care, the purpose of the committee is to establish a conduit both to and from pharmacy technicians to the Board.

Technicians appointed to the committee are Denise Beck of Las Vegas; Lisa Bingaman of Dayton; Mark Brunton of Las Vegas; Dani Dooley of Fernley; Ron Krakowiak of Reno; Kim Pinson of Reno; and Adrienne Santiago of Reno.

The committee met for the first time in December and will meet quarterly for the time being. The primary areas of discussion revolved around the Board’s concerns with technician drug diversion and technician initiated prescription errors. The committee is putting forth some suggestions that will be presented to the Board at its next scheduled meeting.

Board staff would like to thank the members of the committee for their willingness to sacrifice their valuable

Continued on page 4



NABP Seeking Pharmacists in All Practice Areas to Take Survey

The expertise of pharmacists in all areas of pharmacy practice is needed for an online survey NABP is conducting as part of a full pharmacy practice analysis. The survey, which is available at www.zoomerang.com/Survey/?p=WEB228YSHUR9UR, will run from April 1 to June 30, 2009. Survey results will furnish data necessary to update and validate the current North American Pharmacist Licensure Examination® (NAPLEX®) competency statements, which are scheduled to be revised and implemented into the 2010 blueprint.

NABP conducts a pharmacy practice analysis at least every five years in accordance with standard testing industry examination development and revision guidelines. The analysis allows NABP to ensure that the NAPLEX competencies are in line with the existing pharmacy practice standards and that they accurately reflect the current knowledge, skills, and abilities of entry-level pharmacists seeking licensure.

Teen Abuse of Prescription Medications: Curtailing a Growing and Dangerous Trend

Teen-targeted, antidrug campaigns have shifted focus to tackle the current culprit in teen drug abuse: prescription medications. The nonprofit Partnership for a Drug-Free America (Partnership), and government agencies such as the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) are using Web sites and televised public service announcements to educate parents and teens about the dangers of prescription drug abuse as well as prevention strategies. In support of such efforts, the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy® (NABP®) is taking steps to raise awareness among pharmacy stakeholders about the urgency of the issue, the benefits of prevention counseling for parents and teens, and support of local medication disposal programs.

A Trend with Deadly Consequences

The teen prescription drug abuse trend demands an assertive approach, as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) indicates that unintentional drug poisoning from misuse of prescription drugs is now the second leading cause of accidental death in the United States. Further, according to the Drug Abuse Warning Network, emergency room visits for prescription medication abuse and “street drugs” are almost equal. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) studies reveal that more teens are trying prescription medications in order to “get high” than marijuana.

To complicate matters, a study done by the Partnership suggests that prescription drugs are not just replacing illicit drugs but instead appear to be an intermediate step in drug use. As one survey participant stated, “[T]aking pills made me much more open to taking x [ecstasy]. At a certain point, it just became another pill.”

Prescription Drugs of Choice for Teens

Pain relievers such as Vicodin® and OxyContin®, stimulants such as Adderall® and Ritalin®, and tranquilizers such as Xanax® and Valium® are the prescription medications most frequently abused by teenagers, the Partnership finds.

Putting the problem in perspective, SAMHSA studies from 2007 show that 2.1 million adolescents age 12 or older tried prescription medications for nonmedical uses – the same number that tried marijuana. Tranquilizers (1.2 million teens), cocaine (0.9 million teens),

ecstasy (0.8 million teens), inhalants (0.8 million teens), and stimulants (0.6 million teens) were the next drugs most frequently chosen by teens for first time use. SAMHSA reports that, every day, 2,500 youths (age 12 to 17) abuse a prescription pain reliever for the first time. Among teens who have abused painkillers, nearly one-fifth (18%) used them at least weekly in the past year.

Teens are also abusing over-the-counter products such as cough/cold medications. According to a SAMHSA study, 3.1 million people aged 12 to 25 had tried cough or cold medications to get high in their lifetime, and almost 1 million had done so in 2005.

Why Teens Choose Prescription Medications

In surveys conducted by the Partnership, teens reported that they used prescription drugs to help them deal with problems, manage their lives, lower stress, and enhance performance, as well as to get high.

According to ONDCP’s 2008 report, *Prescription for Danger: A Report on the Troubling Trend of Prescription and Over-the-Counter Drug Abuse Among the Nation’s Teens*, teens think that using prescription medications to manage stress or get high is safer than using street drugs. Further, prescription medications are more easily available to teens than illicit drugs such as cocaine or ecstasy. Teens obtain medications from the medicine cabinet at home, through friends, or at friends’ homes.

While prescription drugs may be more readily accessible for teens, large numbers are combining these medications with alcohol and/or illicit drugs. For example, 49% of teens who abused painkillers reported using two or more other drugs, including alcohol (81%) and marijuana (58%), ONDCP reports. Further, the report notes, poisonings as a result of combining prescription and over-the-counter drugs have risen drastically.

Stemming the Growth of Prescription Drug Abuse

In response to this growing problem, organizations and government agencies recommend educating both parents and teens about the dangers of prescription drug abuse, and modifying and encouraging the use of prescription medication disposal programs.

At its 104th Annual Meeting in May 2008, NABP passed a resolution that stipulates use of its newsletter programs to keep pharmacists and other constituents informed about the urgent issue of teen prescription drug abuse, so that they in turn can help to provide parents and teens with current prevention information. Such educational efforts are vital, as the Partnership reports that most parents do not realize that teens are intentionally abusing medications to get high, and that they think their teens are not vulnerable to prescription drug abuse. Further, the Partnership finds that, like many teens, parents tend to think that teen abuse of prescription medications is safer than teen abuse of street drugs.

Organizations such as the Partnership aim to educate parents and teens directly, informing them about the abuse trend, and emphasizing the necessity of using prescription medications appropriately.

Knowledge of this information is important to pharmacists since they are in an excellent position to counsel parents on teen drug abuse when dispensing prescriptions with high abuse potential.

Phil Bauer of the Partnership stated in his presentation at the NABP 104th Annual Meeting: “We need to reach out and empower parents, give them the information they need. Parents talking to kids reduces



drug use by 50%.” Similar to past drug prevention programs that focused on illicit drugs, Bauer and the Partnership encourage parents to communicate with their kids about prescription drug abuse and its dangers. Likewise, ONDCP reports that when parents express strong disapproval of drug abuse, teens are much less likely to adopt this dangerous behavior.

Another immediate step parents can take, the Partnership advises, is safeguarding the medications kept in their homes. Safeguarding involves properly disposing of unused and expired medications, and taking an inventory of all current medications. Further, parents can keep medications stored in an area that is not readily accessible to teens or their friends.

To raise awareness among families and the public, the Partnership, along with ONDCP, launched a media campaign using their Web sites as well as televised public service announcements aired during the 2008 Super Bowl. The Partnership Web site provides a list of facts parents can stress to teens. The Web site states: “The Partnership is urging parents, both through this new campaign and through our online resources and information to learn about this serious problem, share the information with their teens, and take action to prevent teens from accessing these medications at home.”

More information and resources are available on the Partnership Web site at www.drugfree.org.

Health Care Consumers:

Essential Partners in Safe Medication Use



This column was prepared by the Institute for Safe Medication Practices (ISMP). ISMP is an independent nonprofit agency that analyzes medication errors, near misses, and potentially hazardous conditions as reported by pharmacists and other practitioners. ISMP then makes appropriate contacts with companies and regulators, gathers expert opinion about prevention measures, and publishes its recommendations. To read about the risk reduction strategies that you can put into practice today, subscribe to ISMP Medication Safety Alert!® Community/Ambulatory Edition by visiting www.ismp.org. ISMP is a Federally Certified Patient Safety Organization, providing legal protection and confidentiality for submitted patient safety data and error reports. ISMP is also a Food and Drug Administration (FDA) MedWatch partner. Call 1-800-FAIL-SAF(E) to report medication errors to the ISMP Medication Errors Reporting Program (MERP) or report online at www.ismp.org. ISMP address: 200 Lakeside Dr, Suite 200, Horsham, PA 19044. Phone: 215/947-7797. E-mail: ismpinfo@ismp.org.

A study in the September 10, 2007 *Archives of Internal Medicine* found that a significant percentage of American consumers may not be using their medications safely.

Between 1998 and 2005 alone, there was a 360% increase in deaths attributed to consumers using medications incorrectly at home (not involving alcohol or street drugs).

Proactive communication between pharmacists and patients is a major way to reduce the risk of medication errors.

However, there are barriers to patients communicating with pharmacists about the drugs they are taking, including limited time

for speaking with patients and lack of appropriate written materials. Pharmacists should explore ways to make suitable written materials on medications readily available. Be sure to seek feedback from patients (eg, through focus groups and targeted satisfaction survey questions) to ensure that written materials effectively communicate the most important information.

Management support for widespread education is essential to ensure effective use of electronic resources as well as dedicated time to talk with patients.

Many pharmacists assume that their patients can read, understand, and act on instructions on medication labels and in medication information pamphlets. But although 90 million Americans read below the 5th grade level, 98% of the medication information sheets accompanying dispensed prescriptions are written at a 9th to 12th grade level or higher.

Poor health literacy can lead to consumers misusing and making mistakes with their medications. Adults with low health literacy:

- ◆ Are less likely to adhere to prescribed treatment and self-care regimens
- ◆ Make more medication or treatment errors

Children are particularly vulnerable to medication misuse. One study has demonstrated that parents give their children an incorrect dose of over-the-counter fever medicine 47% of the time. Other recent studies have shown that educating parents on how to measure and administer the correct dose of medication for their children can prevent serious errors.

When dispensing pediatric medication, involve the child's parents and demonstrate correct measurement and administration techniques when possible. Emphasize the importance of using an appropriate measuring device (the original product dropper or dosing cup, or proper type of syringe), not a household spoon.

The Internet has opened a whole new avenue for consumers to obtain information on how to use their medications. Americans spend a large portion of time online searching for advice about health and safety. According to the 2007 *Preventing Medication Errors*, the percentage of adults who have sought health information online grew from 27% (54 million) in 1998 to 53% (117 million) in 2005.

But the report found that while there is an abundance of Internet-based health information, the quality of that information is variable.

ISMP maintains links to leading patient safety entities and information on its Web site, www.ismp.org, and recently launched a consumer-focused Web site that provides even more specific medication safety information. Visit the new site at www.ConsumerMedSafety.org.

FDA Expands Warning to Consumers about Tainted Weight Loss Pills

On January 8, 2009, FDA expanded its nationwide alert to consumers about tainted weight loss pills that contain undeclared, active pharmaceutical ingredients. On December 22, 2008, FDA warned consumers not to purchase or consume 28 different products marketed for weight loss. Since that time, FDA analysis has identified 41 more tainted weight loss products that may put consumers' health at risk. The complete list of drugs is available on the FDA Web site.

time and energy to participate. Technicians wishing to offer discussion items may contact any of the committee members or the Board office.

Error Prevention Through Better Communication

Your patients need to hear and understand what you are saying and you need to hear what the patient is both saying and not saying. Breakdown of communication between the pharmacist and his or her patient could lead to a tragic medication error. Here are some suggestions for better communication:

- ◆ **Environment:** Patients need to feel welcome and comfortable without worry of being overheard.
- ◆ **Eye Contact:** This demonstrates your attention to the patient.
- ◆ **Ask and Listen:** Ask for feedback and listen to the response to ascertain whether the patient indeed understands and that you are on the right level of understanding.
- ◆ **Repeat the Instructions:** Reinforce your instructions by having the patient repeat back to you what they heard. You may be surprised!

Effective communication generally does not require a lot of time, may be enhanced with a simple diagram or drawing, and certainly can help prevent a medication error.

Buprenorphine for Pain

Although buprenorphine is not approved for use in pain, pharmacists are seeing an increasing number of prescriptions for this use. Rather than prescribed as a daily dose for addiction, it is usually given three to four times daily for pain. As you are all aware, buprenorphine prescribed for addiction requires the practitioner to have an "X" Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) number, indicating special training in its use. It is legal for you to fill a buprenorphine prescription for pain with the pre-

scriber's regular DEA number just like all other Schedule III drugs. Your duty is to ensure that the prescription is indeed for the treatment of pain, which should hopefully be noted in the directions. Since buprenorphine can displace opioid agonists, watch for interactions that may precipitate withdrawal.

Prescribing by an Optometrist

The Board office often gets calls asking where in our law it indicates just what an optometrist is authorized to prescribe. The answer does not lie in Chapter 639, which is the chapter on pharmacists and pharmacy, but rather in Chapter 636, the chapter on optometry, explaining why many of you cannot find it. NRS 636.024 ("Therapeutic pharmaceutical agent" defined) states that an optometrist may prescribe the following if approved by Food and Drug Administration for the treatment of abnormalities of the eye or its appendages:

- ◆ a topical medicine;
- ◆ an oral antibiotic;
- ◆ an oral medication for allergies that does not contain steroids; or
- ◆ an analgesic of hydrocodone with compounds, codeine with compounds, or propoxyphene with compounds.

One wonders if they are aware of recent talk about discontinuing propoxyphene?

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