

— Atlanta, GA • March 28-31, 2016 —  
**NATIONAL**  
**Rx DRUG ABUSE & HEROIN**  
**SUMMIT**  
NationalRxDrugAbuseSummit.org

*The largest national collaboration for those impacted by Rx drug abuse & heroin use.*

## In This Issue:

- \* [MA dental schools to introduce training on opioid abuse](#)
- \* [2 more state laws banning OTC cough medicine sales take effect](#)
- \* [White House pushes back against Super Bowl ad](#)
- \* [Commentary: Workers' Comp leading the way on opioids](#)

## Summit Spotlight:

### [Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack to kick-off 2016 Summit](#)

Our country's drug problem is unique and requires a collaborative, all-hands-on-deck approach. Secretary of Agriculture [Tom Vilsack](#), will be featured during the Summit's opening General Session on **Monday, March 28**.

Secretary Vilsack was recently charged by President Obama to lead the USDA's new "Rural America Opioid Initiative," a new interagency effort focused on addressing rural America's struggles with heroin and opioid abuse. These efforts include addressing the 76 percent shortage of mental illness and substance abuse services in rural areas.

Overdose deaths in the United States continue to increase, driven in large part by sharp spikes in heroin deaths and an emerging increase in deaths involving illicit synthetic opioids. According to the CDC, 45 percent of people who had used heroin were also addicted to prescription opioid painkillers. Secretary Vilsack, who has experienced the impact of addiction within his own family, will discuss the strategies to be taken through this new initiative.

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### [Federal Track breakout sessions announced](#)

Descriptions of the [Federal Track](#) breakout sessions to be offered at the **2016 National Rx Drug Abuse & Heroin Summit** are now available.

The [Federal Track](#) will examine a number of initiatives at the community, state and national levels designed to enhance collaboration among advocates, healthcare and law enforcement professionals. Attendees will hear from leaders of national

organizations, medical directors, state attorneys general, and top federal officials who are tasked with developing and implementing innovative strategies, as well as enforcing policies and laws.

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## Top Stories in the News:

*Disclaimer: Articles and links within articles do not necessarily reflect the views or opinions of the National Rx*

*Drug Abuse & Heroin Summit or Operation UNITE.*

### [MA dental schools to introduce training on opioid abuse](#)

*Matt Murphy, Statehouse News Service via WBUR*

As he waits on the Legislature to compromise over opioid abuse prevention strategies, Massachusetts Gov. Charlie Baker on Thursday, February 11, detailed an agreement reached with the deans of the state's three dental medicine schools to introduce training for opioid abuse prevention and management into their core curriculums.

The governor, who has reached similar agreements with the heads of the state's medical schools over improved training of future physicians to deal with pain management and substance abuse, continues to take steps on his own to chip away at the substance abuse crisis and the proliferation of addictive opioids.

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### [Two more state laws banning OTC cough medicine sales take effect](#)

*Celia Vimont, Join Together*

Tennessee and New Jersey are the latest states to enact legislation prohibiting sales of over-the-counter (OTC) cough medicines containing dextromethorphan (DXM) to minors. The laws are designed to decrease the abuse rate of these medicines by teens, while maintaining access for legitimate consumers of these products.

Tennessee's law took effect January 1, 2016, while New Jersey's law took effect February 1. California was the first state to prohibit sales to minors in 2012.

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### [White House pushes back against Super Bowl ad](#)

*Gregory Corte, USA Today*

The White House criticized a pharmaceutical industry ad airing during Sunday's Super Bowl (February 7), saying it could help fuel an opioid addiction crisis.

The advertisement was intended to raise awareness of opioid-induced constipation, and was paid for by two drugmakers marketing a drug to treat it. But in the midst of an administration proposal to spend \$1.1 billion more on treatment for prescription drug and heroin abuse, a top White House official suggested that the ad went too far.

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## [Commentary: Workers' Comp is leading the way on opioids](#)

*Joe Paduda, Managed Care Matters weblog*

Okay, so work comp is not the most progressive industry. We are - often justifiably - seen as slow-moving, overly conservative, reluctant to adopt change and averse to innovation.

Except when it comes to opioids, where work comp has been far in front - and continues to lead. By advocating for treatment guidelines, restrictions of physician dispensing of opioids, formularies tied tightly to UR, analytics and clinical intervention, work comp has long been very active in a crisis that is only now getting real attention in the "real world."

Joe Paduda is a panelist in the [Third-Party Payer Track on Using Workers' Compensation Formularies to Reduce Rx Opioids](#) on Wednesday, March 30.

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