Preventing Prescription Drug Misuse: Selected Strategies and Associated Risk Factors

The table below presents selected strategies to prevent prescription drug misuse. These strategies have been selected because research shows that they directly address common risk factors associated with NMUPD. For each strategy, we provide a brief description and the associated factor(s) it addresses. Please note that while other strategies are currently in use, this list represents the few that have been rigorously evaluated.

Strategy	Strategy Description	Associated Risk Factor(s)
Controlled substance lock-in programs	Implemented by private or public insurance companies (such as Medicaid), these programs are designed to restrict patients access to prescriptions for controlled substances, typically by requiring patients to use a single prescriber or pharmacy to obtain their prescription medications.	• Access to prescription drugs[2]
Patient education	Patients are provided with information on the overdose potential of prescription drugs and the importance of safeguarding prescriptions.	• Lack of knowledge about the potential dangers of prescription opioid misuse[3] • Access to drugs prescribed to others (for example, to family members or friends)[4]

Strategy	Strategy Description	Associated Risk Factor(s)
Prescriber education	Prescribers learn about the benefits and risks of prescribing opioids, including strategies to prevent misuse, while maintaining legitimate and appropriate access to opioids for their patients.	• Access to opioids[5] • Access to opioid prescriptions for individuals at high risk of developing misuse or dependence[6] • Obtaining multiple prescriptions[7] • Large dosage prescribed[8] • High potency drugs prescribed[8] • Doctor shopping[7] • Chronic pain[7]
Social marketing campaigns	These campaigns use techniques adapted from commercial marketing to encourage favorable and voluntary behavior change in risky behaviors associated with NMUPD.	• Lack of knowledge about the potential dangers of prescription opioid misuse[9] • Access to drugs prescribed to others (for example, family members or friends)[9]
Disposal programs	These programs encourage people to properly dispose of their unused or expired prescription medications, often by bringing them to designated drop boxes.	• Availability of prescription drugs[10] • Lack of knowledge about the potential dangers of prescription opioid misuse[11]
Prescription drug monitoring programs	Prescription Drug Monitoring Programs (PDMPs) are electronic databases that track and house data on prescriptions and dispensations of controlled substances.	• Access to prescription drugs[12] • Doctor shopping[13]

Strategy	Strategy Description	Associated Risk Factor(s)
Use of screening tools	These tools are designed to help prescribers assess a patient's risk for misusing or becoming addicted to prescription medications.	• Psychological distress/mental illness[14] • History of substance use or misuse[14]

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