



Prescription Drug Monitoring Program: Useful Tool or Government Control?

by John D. Lilly, DO

There are just two questions to ask about any government run program. First, is it a proper function of government that adheres to the Constitution? Second, does it work? The PDMP fails on both counts. It clearly violates Article I, Section 15 of the Missouri Constitution. The covered prescriptions that you give to the pharmacy go into a mandatory, involuntary database which is an illegal search and seizure of your property. As I proved in my original column, the PDMPs have not reduced the death rate, so they fail the second test.

If the government has a database, it will find a way mine it for information. In 2016, Scripps News found during a five-month investigation that law enforcement tapped into at least 344,921 prescription histories of Americans between 2014-2015 in the states that don't require a warrant or another form of court authorization. That is more than six times the number of searches that took place by law enforcement in states that have more privacy safeguards enacted.¹

Dr. Page ended his column with, "We are both entrusted with and empowered to work for the safety and well being of the good people of Missouri." If this is for the safety of the citizens, then why stop at Schedule IV? Why not put all prescriptions in a database? If this is for safety's sake, why don't we let the Board of Healing Arts randomly search our patient files looking for improper treatment? If you are doing everything correctly, you have nothing to hide. Why not put all of the physician's scheduled prescriptions in a database and search for improper prescribing habits? Oh wait, that's the function of Gov. Greiten's PDMP. Now it doesn't look so good, does it? For safety's sake, let the police randomly stop vehicles to search them for

anything illegal. For safety's sake, let the military randomly search our homes. That is what the British soldiers did to the colonists to make sure they had the proper "stamp" on their documents which sparked a rebellion (1765 Stamp Act). The "safety" argument always leads to a slippery slope which ends in expanded government control and the loss of personal liberty.

References

1. Scripps News investigation led by Mark Greenblatt, senior national investigative correspondent, and Angela M. Hill, national investigative producer. <http://www.thedenverchannel.com/longform/so-you-think-prescriptions-are-private>



John D. Lilly, DO, MBA, MSMA member since 1998, is a Family Practice physician in Springfield, Mo.
Contact: johnlilly97@gmail.com

