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**Board of Pharmacy Awarded Federal Funding to Address Prescription Drug Abuse  
*Innovative Program Will Use Data to Promote Early Intervention & Treatment***

September 27, 2017 – Columbus, Ohio – The State of Ohio Board of Pharmacy announced the receipt of a \$399,918 grant from the U.S. Department of Justice to fund a two-year pre-criminal intervention program to address prescription drug abuse.

The program will utilize data from the Ohio Automated Rx Reporting System (OARRS) to identify individuals who are exhibiting possible signs of prescription drug abuse, including those who are seeing multiple prescribers to illegally obtain controlled substances – a practice commonly referred to as “doctor shopping.” Once identified, specially trained Board of Pharmacy agents, with the help of local law enforcement and county treatment agencies, will engage those individuals to limit their overutilization of the healthcare system and connect them with appropriate drug treatment or other support services.

“The goal of the program is to prevent addicted individuals from entering the criminal justice system,” said State of Ohio Board of Pharmacy Executive Director Steven W. Schierholt. “By engaging early, we can direct individuals to treatment before they turn to illicit, and more potent, drugs such as heroin or fentanyl.”

Established in 2006, OARRS is a statewide database that collects information on all prescriptions for controlled substances that are dispensed by pharmacies or furnished by prescribers in Ohio. OARRS is designed to monitor this information for suspected abuse or diversion and can provide a prescriber or pharmacist critical information regarding a patient’s controlled substance prescription history. For more information on OARRS, please visit: [www.pharmacy.ohio.gov/oarrs](http://www.pharmacy.ohio.gov/oarrs).

The program is funded through the U.S. Department of Justice’s Harold Rogers Prescription Drug Monitoring Program. For more information on this program, please visit: <https://go.usa.gov/xRJWE>.

