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For Immediate Release

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## **Governor DeWine Announces New Effort to Improve Care Coordination and Reduce Fatal Drug Overdoses**

### ***OARRS Now Alerts Healthcare Providers About Previous Overdose History***

December 16, 2024 – Columbus, Ohio – Ohio Governor Mike DeWine and Ohio Board of Pharmacy Executive Director Steven Schierholt announced today that Ohio’s prescription drug monitoring program, known as the Ohio Automated Rx Reporting System (OARRS), will begin alerting healthcare providers about patients who have experienced a non-fatal drug overdose. These alerts are intended to improve care coordination and promote access to medication for opioid use disorder and other tools to prevent fatal overdoses.

“The goal of this alert is to give us an extra chance to save someone’s life,” said Governor DeWine. “The research shows us that people who have recently experienced a non-fatal overdose are at a higher risk to overdose again in the near future, and that they often have regular interactions with the healthcare system – including pharmacists and prescribers. This new alert system will be a valuable tool allowing our healthcare providers the opportunity to educate and offer treatment and prevention options to these individuals before a tragedy occurs.”

The data provided to OARRS is being reported by Ohio hospitals via the Ohio Department of Health because of a rule change [announced by Governor DeWine earlier this year](#). Using this data, the OARRS system will now flag for prescribers and pharmacists any patient who experienced a non-fatal drug overdose who was treated at an Ohio emergency department on or after April 8, 2024. The alerts will only be available for OARRS users that are prescribers and pharmacists.

“Data from state prescription drug monitoring programs, such as OARRS, continues to be an invaluable resource for healthcare providers,” said Ohio Board of Pharmacy Executive Director Steven W. Schierholt. “With this alert, we are encouraging prescribers and pharmacists to

engage with their patients and offer proven interventions that will prevent fatal drug overdoses in the future.”

Among Ohioans who died in 2022 from an unintentional drug overdose, at least 32% experienced a prior non-fatal overdose. Additionally, 26% of those who suffered a fatal overdose in 2022 received a prescription for a controlled substance from a healthcare provider within 60 days of their death. These interactions with the healthcare system reinforce the need to ensure high-risk patients have access to interventions such as overdose reversal medications (e.g., naloxone) and medication for opioid use disorder.

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. To assist healthcare providers in using this new alert, the Board of Pharmacy has developed training materials that can be accessed by visiting: [www.pharmacy.ohio.gov/NFOD](http://www.pharmacy.ohio.gov/NFOD).

This new alert system is another example of Governor DeWine’s ongoing and comprehensive efforts to prevent overdose deaths and fight drug addiction. Ohio’s coordinated efforts are achieving results.

In October, [Governor DeWine announced](#) that newly verified data by the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) demonstrated that the number of overdose deaths in Ohio have dropped substantially for a second consecutive calendar year.

ODH’s [2023 Ohio Unintentional Drug Overdose Report](#) revealed a 9% decline in verified overdose deaths across the state. The report shows that Ohio has now outperformed national overdose death trends for two years in a row. In 2023, Ohio’s 9% decrease in overdose deaths was better than the 2% decrease seen nationwide. In 2022, Ohio’s 5% decrease in overdose deaths was better than the 1% increase seen nationwide.

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