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A Matter of Life & Death: Anti-Addiction Group Leads Fight Requiring Doctors to Use Prescription History Databases

ATLANTA – Shatterproof, a national anti-addiction organization, today released a comprehensive report calling on state legislatures to require doctors to use state-run databases that keep track of a patient’s history of opioid and sedative prescriptions.

The report includes 12 Best Practices for states to use in drafting laws that would require doctors to check the databases, known as Prescription Drug Monitoring Programs (PDMPs), every time they write a prescription for an opioid painkiller or a sedative. When properly used, PDMPs prevent doctors from accidentally prescribing a lethal combination of drugs. They can also help identify signs of addiction in time to direct patients into treatment.

“The devastation to our families is directly linked to the overprescribing of painkillers. Requiring doctors to use these databases is one of the most important things we can do to slow this epidemic,” said Shatterproof founder and CEO Gary Mendell. He pointed to a recent study showing that in a sample of states without mandatory checks, doctors use the PDMPs only 14% of the time. “The evidence is clear: if states don’t mandate it, doctors won’t use PDMPs. Every day we wait, more of our brothers and sisters, husbands and wives, sons and daughters will die,” Mendell said.

“PDMPs can help health care providers and pharmacists identify patients suffering from addiction,” said Dr. Andrew Kolodny, executive director of the group Physicians for Responsible Opioid Prescribing, and one of the nation’s leading addiction specialists. “Better utilization of this valuable tool can save lives.”

Shatterproof will send the report, *Prescription Drug Monitoring Programs: Critical Elements of Effective State Legislation*, to state lawmakers, followed by an aggressive push in the 43 states that don’t require PDMP checks.

A PDMP Fact Sheet and the Shatterproof report are attached.



About Gary Mendell:

Gary Mendell is the founder and CEO of Shatterproof. Mr. Mendell founded Shatterproof to spare others the tragedy his family suffered with the death of his son Brian, who lost his battle with addiction in 2011. Mr. Mendell is the founder and former CEO of HEI Hotels & Resort and the former president of Starwood Lodging Trust.

About Shatterproof:

Shatterproof is a national organization committed to protecting loved ones from addiction to illicit and prescription drugs, and alcohol, and ending the stigma and suffering of those affected by this disease. Shatterproof provides information and resources for those living with addiction and their families, enabling powerful new evidence-based approaches to prevention, treatment and recovery, and takes the issue to the steps of Capitol Hill.