

## **Health Care Regulatory Boards Launch Collaborative Effort Aimed at Opioid Epidemic**

*Boards of medicine, pharmacy, nursing, and dentistry to join forces*

WASHINGTON, D.C. (September 29, 2021) Four organizations representing the state regulatory boards that license U.S. physicians, physician assistants, pharmacists, nurses, and dentists have announced the launch of the Opioid Regulatory Collaborative (ORC) – a new partnership aimed at addressing the nation’s opioid epidemic.

The ORC will bring together senior leaders from the [American Association of Dental Boards \(AADB\)](#), the [Federation of State Medical Boards \(FSMB\)](#), the [National Association of Boards of Pharmacy \(NABP\)](#) and the [National Council of State Boards of Nursing \(NCSBN\)](#) to share resources and strategies to reduce opioid substance use disorder among the public as well as health care practitioners.

The ORC’s three primary goals are to:

- Ensure that medical, pharmacy, nursing, and dentistry regulatory boards are kept informed of trends and developments in the nation’s ongoing effort to reduce opioid substance use disorder.
- Seek better alignment of opioid-related guidance and policies across regulatory boards to increase the effectiveness in addressing opioid issues.
- Partner with and support the initiatives of other health care organizations aimed at the opioid epidemic, including the National Academy of Medicine’s Action Collaborative on Countering the U.S. Opioid Epidemic.

By uniting the key health care professions that prescribe and dispense prescription medications, the ORC hopes to bring a new focus to the nation’s ongoing efforts to curb opioid misuse.

Collectively, the AADB, FSMB, NABP, and NCSBN represent the various state member-boards that regulate a combined total of more than five million physicians, physician assistants, pharmacists, dentists, and nurses practicing in the United States.

Representatives of the four organizations have begun quarterly meetings and are planning a formal summit meeting to take place in Washington, D.C., in March 2022.

**In recent decades, the opioid epidemic has become a significant national public health crisis. Studies have shown that as many as one quarter or more of patients prescribed opioids may misuse them, and roughly 10% of patients using opioids for chronic pain eventually develop an opioid use disorder. In 2019, nearly 50,000 people in the United States died from opioid-involved overdoses. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that the total economic burden of opioid prescription misuse in the United States is \$78.5 billion a year.**

**Opioid prescription misuse is a serious issue within the health professions as well, with studies indicating that some licensed physicians, nurses, and other licensed health care professionals may engage in prescription misuse during their careers.**

**“In 2017, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services declared the opioid crisis a public health emergency. The impact across America has been devastating,” said Tonia Socha-Mower, MA, MBA, EdD, Executive Director of the American Association of Dental Boards. “The AADB Board of Directors is excited for the opportunity to work with our health care regulator colleagues to help fight this national epidemic. Confronting the problem together, we can make great progress.”**

**“The gravity and persistence of the opioid epidemic continue to remind us that every organization – particularly those that regulate medication prescribing and dispensing – must remain vigilant and continually seek new ways to address the issue,” said FSMB President and CEO Humayun J. Chaudhry, DO, MACP. “Our new collaborative establishes an enduring structure through which the partner organizations can leverage their individual efforts for greater impact.”**

**“Pharmacists are accessible in nearly every community, including those that do not have convenient access to other healthcare providers, much less providers who focus on treating opioid use disorder,” said Lemrey “Al” Carter, PharmD, MS, RPh, Executive Director/Secretary of NABP. “NABP and its member boards of pharmacy look forward to working with the partners in this collaborative as key leaders in opioid safety and patient care.”**

**“Working together on this critical issue will ensure greater standardization of approach across disciplines,” said David Benton, RGN, PhD, Chief Executive Officer of NCSBN. “Together we can have more impact and wider reach, as there is no part of America that is untouched by this tragedy.”**

## **About the American Association of Dental Boards**

The American Association of Dental Boards is a national association that encourages the highest standards of dental education by promoting higher and uniform standards of qualification for dental practitioners. Membership is comprised of boards of dentistry, advanced education boards, present and past members of those boards, board administrators, board attorneys, educators, practitioners, and other oral health stakeholders. As the national face of state dental boards, we influence the licenses of over half a million oral health practitioners through the regulation of dentists, dental therapists, hygienists, and assistants by our governing members. Our mission is simple: To serve as a resource by providing a national forum for exchange, development, and dissemination of information to assist dental regulatory boards with their obligation to protect the public. For more information, visit <https://www.dentalboards.org>.

## **About the Federation of State Medical Boards**

The Federation of State Medical Boards (FSMB) is a national non-profit organization representing all medical boards within the United States and its territories that license and discipline allopathic and osteopathic physicians and, in some jurisdictions, other health care professionals. The FSMB serves as the voice for state medical boards, supporting them through education, assessment, research and advocacy while providing services and initiatives that promote patient safety, quality health care and regulatory best practices. To learn more about FSMB, visit [www.fsmb.org](http://www.fsmb.org). You can also follow FSMB on Twitter ([@theFSMB](https://twitter.com/theFSMB)).

## **About the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy**

The National Association of Boards of Pharmacy (NABP), found in 1904, is the impartial professional organization that supports the state boards of pharmacy in protecting public health. NABP helps support patient and prescription drug safety, through examinations that assess pharmacist competency, pharmacist licensure transfer and verification services, and various pharmacy accreditation programs. Our membership and staff combine diverse skills and backgrounds, which helps us create innovative programs that meet the public health protection needs of today – with an eye on the future.

## **About the National Council of State Boards of Nursing**

Empowering and supporting nursing regulators across the world in their mandate to protect the public, NCSBN is an independent, not-for-profit organization. As a global leader in regulatory excellence, NCSBN champions regulatory solutions to borderless health care delivery, agile regulatory systems and nurses practicing to the full scope of their education, experience and expertise. A world leader in test development and administration, NCSBN's NCLEX® Exams are internationally recognized as the preeminent nursing examinations. NCSBN's membership is comprised of the nursing regulatory bodies (NRBs) in the 50 states, the District of Columbia and four U.S. territories. There are three exam user members and 27 associate members that are either NRBs or empowered regulatory authorities from other countries or territories. For more information, please visit <https://www.ncsbn.org>.

