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Governor Walker Introduces Legislation to Combat Alaska’s Growing Opioid Epidemic
Bill would increase monitoring of opioids and controlled substance prescription database

March 6, 2017 JUNEAU – As part of his plan to build a safer Alaska, Governor Bill Walker introduced legislation today to change the way opioids are prescribed and monitored.

“Alaska is in the grips of a tragic opioid epidemic,” said Governor Walker. “Abuse of heroin and opioids has torn apart families, increased crime, and led to far too many untimely deaths. The current system is not working, and we must do better. Too often, the path to opioid addiction is through prescription medication. This bill increases education and awareness of opioid abuse, and ensures better monitoring of prescription drugs. Solving our opioid epidemic will require all of us working together. Alaskans deserve it.”

The governor’s bill

- Allows patients to turn down opioids while in medical care;
- Requires continuing education in pain management and opioid addiction for medical providers;
- Limits the initial prescription for opioids to no more than a seven-day supply for outpatient use;
- Requires doctors to discuss the risks of opioid abuse with parents before prescribing to a minor;
- Requires the Board of Veterinary Examiners to educate veterinarians on the signs of opioid abuse in pet owners, and to participate in a prescription database;
- Requires the prescription drug database to be updated daily instead of weekly. Additionally, allows for disciplinary action against pharmacists who do not review the database as required under current law.

Timeline

- February 14 – Governor Walker [issued a disaster declaration](#) so the life-saving drug, naloxone, could be distributed statewide
- February 16 – Governor Walker issued [Administrative Order 283](#) establishing a plan of action that directs state departments to prioritize resources to combat the opioid epidemic and apply for federal grants to fund prevention, treatment and enforcement
- March 6 – Governor Walker [files legislation](#) to change the way opioids are prescribed and monitored

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