

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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OFFICE OF
THE GOVERNOR

NO. 2012-002
DATE February 1, 2012

**AN ORDER ESTABLISHING THE MAINE PRESCRIPTION
DRUG ABUSE TASK FORCE**

WHEREAS, the misuse and abuse of prescription drugs, particularly controlled substances, has become an epidemic in the State of Maine;

WHEREAS, Maine is experiencing increasing and alarming rates of abuse;

WHEREAS, nearly 1,400 Mainers have died from overdoses of pharmaceutical drugs in the last decade and drug-related deaths now exceed traffic fatalities in Maine;

WHEREAS, more than 500 babies born in Maine in 2010 faced opiate withdrawal and other effects of their mothers' prescription drug abuse;

WHEREAS, prescription drug misuse, abuse, and diversion poses a unique challenge because of the need to balance prevention, education, and enforcement with the need for legitimate access;

WHEREAS, a coordinated, statewide approach will be required to address the complex issues involved in Maine's prescription drug abuse problem; and

WHEREAS, The 2011 Prescription Drug Abuse Summit participants resolved to reduce the problem in Maine by implementing four action items;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Paul R. LePage, Governor of the State of Maine, hereby order as follows:

1. The Maine Prescription Drug Abuse Task Force ("Task Force") is hereby established.
2. The membership of the Task Force shall consist of seventeen (17) persons appointed by the Governor, including the following stakeholder groups necessary to end the prescription drug problem in Maine:
 - a. Law enforcement;
 - b. Medical, dental, and pharmacy communities;
 - c. State and local agencies; and
 - d. Education providers.

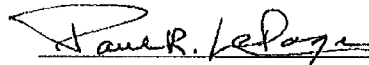
The Governor shall appoint one member of the Task Force to serve as Chair, to serve at the pleasure of the Governor.

3. Members shall serve without compensation but shall be entitled to reimbursement of travel expenses for attending meetings of the Task Force. Such reimbursement and other costs of the Task Force shall be paid by the Department of Public Safety from grant funds provided to the Department to accomplish the objectives of the Task Force.
4. The Task Force shall implement the following action items, as identified by relevant stakeholders at the Prescription Drug Abuse Summit held by the Attorney General in October 2011:
 - a. Develop long-term controlled substance disposal solutions;
 - b. Implement a statewide Diversion Alert Program that provides prescribers with drug crime information from local law enforcement to assist in determining whether patients are legitimately in need of controlled substance prescriptions;
 - c. Develop and field an evidence-based public education campaign, with a unified message addressing prescription drug misuse, abuse, and diversion for statement dissemination in both community education and prescriber training venues; and
 - d. Conduct an active review of the Maine Prescription Monitoring Program, including the scope of access, utilization of available data, thresholds for notification, and mean to achieve near-universal use by prescribers and pharmacists.

The Task Force shall undertake such other duties and responsibilities from time to time as may be required to reduce prescription drug abuse and misuse in Maine.

5. The Task Force shall submit a report to the Governor every six months detailing its progress in implementing the action items and other initiatives. Such report shall be copied to the Attorney General, the Commissioner of Public Safety, the Commissioner of Environmental Protection, and the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services.

The effective date of this Executive Order is February 1, 2012.



Paul R. LePage, Governor