



STATE OF MINNESOTA

Office of Governor Mark Dayton

130 State Capitol ♦ 75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard ♦ Saint Paul, MN 55155

August 4, 2017

Alan Abramson, PhD
Co-Chair
Minnesota e-Health Advisory Committee
Chief Information Officer
HealthPartners Medical Group and Clinics
8170 33rd Avenue South
Bloomington, Minnesota 55425

Paul Kleeberg, MD
Co-Chair
Minnesota e-Health Advisory Committee
Medical Director, Aledade
7811 128th Street W
Apple Valley, Minnesota 55124

Dear Dr. Abramson, Dr. Kleeberg, and Members of the Minnesota e-Health Advisory Committee:

Our nation's devastating opioid epidemic is taking a massive toll on individuals, families and communities. In 2015 alone, more than 15,000 people died from overdoses involving prescription opioids in the United States. In Minnesota in 2015, at least 216 overdose deaths occurred from prescription opioids. Behind these statistics are countless family members, friends, colleagues and communities.

Recognizing the dire nature of this public health problem, I write to ask for your help in stemming the opioid crisis in Minnesota. While there is no single solution to this complex problem, we can work together to make significant progress by better leveraging electronic health and administrative information to prevent and respond to opioid misuse.

One immediate opportunity is to encourage more robust use of e-prescribing for controlled substances. Electronic health records, particularly electronic prescribing of controlled substances (EPCS), can decrease the risk of fraudulent prescriptions and thereby reduce the likelihood of prescription opioid misuse. While EPCS is already required by Minnesota law, its rate of use in practice is still too low. According to the national health information network Surescripts, just one in five prescriptions for controlled substances is currently done electronically.

In addition to EPCS, other e-health tools may be used more effectively to address this epidemic. Examples include better integration of the Prescription Monitoring Program (PMP) into electronic health records, more robust sharing of data with partners seeking to develop prevention efforts, and development of decision support tools that can change prescribing behavior at the point of care.

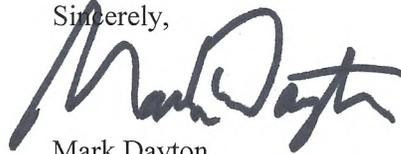
Given the urgent need to address the opioid crisis, I request that the Minnesota e-Health Advisory Committee discuss these issues and provide my administration with a set of recommendations for how we can best use e-health strategies to ease the opioid epidemic. To ensure that these recommendations are available in time for any initiatives that might require legislative proposals and action, I request that the committee send me a preliminary set of recommendations by October 2017 and final recommendations by the end of December 2017.

In developing these recommendations, I urge you to:

- Include strategies to ensure that all stakeholders understand the requirements of current Minnesota laws, and address barriers to compliance;
- Consider EPCS as one important strategy but also look more broadly at other e-health opportunities such as maximizing the use of the PMP and developing tools to support better prescribing practices, including new recommendations from Minnesota's Opioid Prescribing Work Group;
- Consider broader challenges associated with the health information exchange infrastructure and legal environment in Minnesota that may impact efforts to coordinate care for individuals experiencing opioid-related addiction and abuse;
- Address other e-health issues identified by stakeholders as important for responding to this crisis.

Since 2004, the Minnesota e-Health Advisory Committee has provided valuable guidance to Minnesota's Commissioners of Health, to governors, and to the community. Your important work helps inform policy for state government and the people of Minnesota. I thank you for your service and look forward to the recommendations that you will develop.

Sincerely,



Mark Dayton
Governor

cc: Dr. Edward Ehlinger, Commissioner of Health