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CURBING OPIOID ABUSE STARTS WITH EDUCATING PATIENTS & PRESCRIBERS OF RISKS Infographic Challenges the Merits of the “Magic Pill”

The New York State Conference of Blue Cross and Blue Shield Plans (NYSCOP) today released an infographic titled: “[There is No Magic Pill for Fighting Opioid Abuse](#),” which challenges the assertion of legislation soon to be advanced to Governor Cuomo.

The legislation (A.7427A / S.5170A) seeks to increase the use of brand-name Abuse Deterrent Formulation (ADF) opioids, increasing costs while not truly addressing a serious public health concern. An ADF is a pill manufactured to resist its manipulation and abuse, such as being crushed into a powder.

“Unfortunately, the legislation fails to address the root causes of the opioid problem – the combination of overprescribed addictive medications, a false sense of security of prescribers and high-risk behavior by patients,” said Deborah Fasser, a spokeswoman for NYSCOP. “A true policy remedy requires a clear understanding of the causes of abuse and addiction, not simply an action to change the way the pill is constructed.”

According to the infographic:

- The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has indicated that ADF technologies have not yet proven to be successful at deterring the most common form of opioid abuse – swallowing.
- One-third of physicians surveyed mistakenly think oral ingestion is the not the most common form of abuse.
- A Johns Hopkins University survey found that 85 percent of physicians believe opioids are overprescribed; however, 88 percent of the same group is confident they are personally prescribing appropriately.
- In a national survey, nearly half of physicians surveyed wrongly thought that abuse deterrent pills were actually less addictive than their counterparts.

“This legislation relies upon unproven technology that benefits a few select manufacturers ostensibly trying to increase reimbursement for their product. Mandating insurance coverage for these drugs will not solve the problem,” Fasser said. “The key question to ask is: *Do we really need an unproven costly prescription mandate?*”

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Download the infographic here: <http://www.nysblues.org/pdf/2015OpioidAbuseInfographicFinal.pdf>