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Delray cop says prescription drug abuse out of control

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TALLAHASSEE — A Delray Beach vice detective warned Gov. Charlie Crist and the Florida Cabinet that prescription drug abuse has exploded around the state in the past year.

"It is just out of control," Sgt. Brady Myers of the Delray Beach Police Department said during a workshop on illegal drugs on Tuesday. "There is an explosion of pharmaceuticals on the street."

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Unscrupulous patients and unwitting or complicit physicians are parts of a network of "doctor shopping" that allow some individuals to gain hundreds of pain prescriptions per month, Myers said.

The patients then fill the prescriptions for as little as \$25 for 100 pills and resell them for up to \$40 each, netting thousands of dollars which they either pocket or share with brokers who hang out at

pain clinics.

The brokers steer prescription-seekers to specific doctors and stand-alone pharmacies where the prescriptions cannot be linked to others.


The most popular pain drugs are oxycodone, which includes the brand-name drug Oxycontin, and hydrocodone, which includes Vicodin, and which produce heroin-like highs when injected.

Street dealers who at one time sold crack or cocaine have also begun selling prescription drugs, Myers said, making it more difficult to arrest them because possession of the drugs is not a crime unless they try to resell them.

State lawmakers should consider requiring recipients of the pain medication to sign a log and show valid identification before they are able to fill the prescriptions and create a centralized database to validate the prescriptions and keep track of who gets them and in what quantities, Myers suggested.

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