

Letter: Law could reduce doctor shopping

By TCPalm Staff

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It is an epidemic. The Florida Department of Law Enforcement says two people die every week in the Fort Pierce area from abusing prescription drugs.

You may know it as "doctor shopping," when someone goes from doctor to doctor getting prescriptions for addictive pain medications like OxyContin and Valium. Unsuspecting doctors will write the prescriptions and innocent pharmacists will fill them.

Florida lawmakers have a chance to put a stop to it, and we urge them to seize the opportunity.

A bill would create an Internet-based record-keeping system in which the doctor would enter the prescription and the patient's name. Other doctors and pharmacists would have access to the list, so they could visit the Internet site to see if the patient has received the medication before.

Also, investigators would have access to the list to use as evidence.

Opponents are concerned about patient privacy, but access to the Web database is limited and secure, and it would be a crime for unauthorized people to gain access.

This bill will keep innocent doctors and pharmacists from being accused of being a part of these "pill mills," saving reputations while it saves the lives of patients and our schoolchildren who are sometimes sold these drugs.

As a physician who helps patients with legitimate pain issues, I believe it is time we stopped controlled substances from being abused.

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