Wisconsin Attorney General Brad Schimel offered a DOSE OF REALITY today to employers and employees throughout Wisconsin about the dangers of misusing opioid and narcotic pain medications – an abuse that costs U.S. employers almost $26 billion per year. DOSE OF REALITY – Prevent Prescription Painkiller Abuse in Wisconsin, is a statewide marketing campaign designed to raise awareness of this issue and to encourage the community to take action. AG Schimel’s office developed and launched the campaign in September.

“Over the past seven months, we’ve been sharing the crisis posed by the heroin and prescription painkiller epidemic sweeping our state,” Schimel said. “We’ve partnered with the medical community and now we are working with employers to help us in the fight to make our statewide workplaces safer, reduce the economic toll, and save lives.”

The campaign is expanding to the state’s workplaces, as four out of five employers have had to manage employees with the issue. In Wisconsin, 80 percent of Worker’s Compensation claims involving pain medications include opioids.

AG Schimel is sharing a statewide message that through the DOSE OF REALITY website, the Wisconsin Department of Justice is providing materials for employers to share in the workplace to help aid in early intervention – including spotting the signs of abuse and the dangers of using prescription painkillers at work. Kitty Rhoades, Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Health Services stated last fall at the launch of the DOSE OF REALITY campaign, “This is truly a public health crisis, and one that can be eliminated through sharing information about the risks involved in misusing these medications.”
To further assist the business community with sharing this life-saving message, the DOSE OF REALITY website at www.DoseOfRealityWI.gov has been updated to offer information and resources unique to the needs of businesses, including workplace posters and flyers, and a brochure outlining the steps employers can take. These business materials also have been added to the DOSE OF REALITY online ordering portal, which makes DOSE OF REALITY campaign assets available at no charge to DOJ’s business and other partners to access, customize and use in their own workplaces, communities and audiences as they see fit.

The Wisconsin DOJ also has developed a new TV spot as part of this next phase, and will use social media, business outreach, and advertising in other venues to continue to accomplish the following goals:

- Inform and educate Wisconsinites about the improper use of prescription painkillers;
- Warn of the dangers of inadequate storage and disposal of prescription painkillers and encourage everyone statewide to participate in biannual Drug Take Back Days;
- Inform each audience as to the role they play in education and abuse prevention, from businesses, medical providers and parents to high school students and young adults;
- Encourage positive action.

AG Schimel stressed the importance of this prevention campaign in his video message to businesses on the DOSE OF REALITY website, “I have said sharing this message is the most important thing I will do as Attorney General because I believe it will save lives.”

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