Sac State leads effort to cut prescription drug abuse
Will host health care community workshop

Prescription drug abuse is a national epidemic: According to the National Institutes of Health, prescription and over-the-counter drugs – such as pain medications, anxiety and sleep-disorder drugs, and stimulants used to treat ADHD and narcolepsy – are the most commonly abused substances by Americans ages 14 and older after marijuana and alcohol.

In response, Sacramento State is hosting a free community workshop for physicians, dentists, health care students, nurses, and pharmacists from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, April 18, at The WELL. Speakers will include Drug Enforcement Administration Special Agent Tom Lenox and the California State Board of Pharmacy’s executive director, Virginia Herold, both major players in the world of prescription drug abuse prevention.

“It’s a national health concern, it’s a statewide concern, and it affects us here at Sacramento State,” says Janet Dumonchelle, pharmacist in charge at the University’s Student Health and Counseling Services. “This problem is rising exponentially, and we need an entirely new skill set to deal with this issue.”

Attendees will receive valuable education on ways to prevent the redirection of prescriptions for illegitimate purposes – known as drug diversion – and will be able to network with other health care professionals and experts in the field, including the head of the Prescription Drug Abuse Medical Task Force in San Diego.

State Department of Justice officials will be on hand to walk attendees through California’s updated CURES drug monitoring program – it mandates reporting from health care providers who write prescriptions for and/or dispense controlled substances – and will accept providers’ registration forms to ease the sign-up process. With statewide deadlines approaching, this opportunity is a timely incentive for health care providers.

The highlight of the day will be a town hall discussion focusing on problem solving and the opening of communication channels within the medical community.

“At Sac State, we model proactivity for our campus community,” Dumonchelle says. “This is a very important health issue. We want our students to succeed, and we want our community to succeed. This is just the beginning of a highly impactful conversation.”

Preregistration is required. Tickets for physicians, nurses, dentists, pharmacists, and health care students are available at www.eventbrite.com/e/prescription-drug-abuse-diversion-continuing-education-tickets-16257658093. For more information or media assistance, contact Student Health and Counseling Services marketing/communications specialist Karen Christian at (916) 278-2049 or Karen.Christian@csus.edu. – Craig Koscho