

# Florida Prescription Drug Monitoring Program: To be, or not to be?

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Over the past few weeks, new Florida Governor Rick Scott **made it widely known** that he has no interest in allowing the state to develop and deploy a prescription drug monitoring program (PDMP). He's also provided little explanation as to why he wants to prevent a PDMP, which the state legislature fought for and approved a measure to establish just two years ago.

The **PDMP project began** in October 2009, when the Florida Office of Drug Control issued a request for information to determine various options for the drug monitoring system. In July 2010, a request for proposals (RFP) was issued to solicit bids from vendors that could provide, install and maintain a drug monitoring database across the state. However, due to a protest by Optimum Technology, Inc., the RFP was canceled and a new solicitation was issued in October 2010. The ultimate goal was to prevent individuals from obtaining prescriptions illegally, which in turn could prevent the rising number of deaths caused by prescription drug use.

One of the difficulties in understanding Gov. Scott's stance on the state's PDMP is that the cost of the system is budget neutral. The state received federal grants and donations to foot the \$1.2 million bill for the system installation and \$500,000 yearly maintenance costs. In January 2011, Gov. Scott dismissed Director of the Office of Drug Control Bruce Grant and now has his sights on dismantling the entire agency.

The state has had significant issues with storefront pain clinics, or so-called "pill mills," especially in Broward County where more than 100 operate. Advocates of the new drug monitoring database are gearing to fight the plan to prevent the database from being created. In order for Gov. Scott to eliminate the program, he will need approval from the state's legislature.

While it is not uncommon for a governor, senator, or even president to disagree with their constituents about a law or other political matter, in this case, it is hard to understand how Gov. Scott can come to the conclusion that this program would not work. While full reasons for his attempts at terminating the program are not known, it is difficult to ignore evidence in other state proving the programs have been very successful. Vendors have worked hard to develop these databases that directly impact the health of individuals and curb illegal use of pain medication. Do these programs stop illegal drug use? Of course not, but using a system that can lower the chances of overdoses is well worth it.

## GovWin's Take:

Should Gov. Scott eliminate the Office of Drug Control, it would be extremely troublesome to see jobs eliminated, along with the time, money and support that have gone into the program. If the program does not move forward, it would appear to have been a waste of time and resources for vendors and employees who spent time developing a PDMP. Also, vendors who provide drug monitoring software may no longer be able to look to Florida as a place to do business.

GovWin has released its ***State & Local Justice/Public Safety and Homeland Security Market, 2010-2015*** report, which analyzes the trends for police protection, corrections, and judicial IT as well as homeland security. Demand for vendor-furnished information systems and services by U.S. state and local public safety agencies will increase from \$5.3 billion in 2010 to \$6.1 billion in 2015, bringing \$800 million in new spending to the market at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 2.9%.