

1 INTERIM STUDY PROPOSAL 2021-013

2
3 REQUESTING THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HEALTH, WELFARE, AND
4 LABOR TO STUDY THE EFFECTS AND IMPACTS OF ACTS 2021, NO. 651
5 WHICH MANDATES THE COPRESCRIPTION OF AN OPIOID ANTAGONIST UNDER
6 CERTAIN CONDITIONS.
7

8 WHEREAS, Acts 2021, No. 651, sponsored by Senator Bledsoe and
9 Representative Johnson, mandated the coprescription of an opioid antagonist
10 to a patient who does not have an existing prescription for an opioid
11 antagonist when prescribing or dispensing an opioid if:

12 (1) The opioid dosage prescribed or dispensed is equal to or in
13 excess of fifty morphine milligram equivalents (50 MME) per day;

14 (2) A benzodiazepine has been prescribed or dispensed for the
15 patient in the past or will be prescribed or dispensed at the same time as
16 the opioid; or

17 (3) The patient has a history of opioid use disorder or drug
18 overdose; and
19

20 WHEREAS, a healthcare professional who coprescribes an opioid
21 antagonist is required under Acts 2021, No. 651 to provide counseling and
22 patient education to the patient, or a patient's parent or guardian if the
23 patient is under eighteen (18) years of age, as provided in guidance or rules
24 of the appropriate licensing entity; and
25

26 WHEREAS, Acts 2021, No. 651 required, no later than six (6) months
27 after the effective date of the act, the Arkansas State Medical Board and the
28 Arkansas State Board of Pharmacy to jointly develop and publish guidance or
29 rules that address the circumstances in which a healthcare professional is
30 required to prescribe or dispense, or both, an opioid antagonist to a patient
31 when prescribing or dispensing an opioid; and
32

33 WHEREAS, Acts 2021, No. 651 did not contain an emergency clause or
34 effective date clause; and
35

1 WHEREAS, in 2017, Arkansas ranked second among the states for the
2 quantity of opioids prescribed, with one hundred five and four-tenths (105.4)
3 opioid prescriptions for every one hundred (100) persons; and
4

5 WHEREAS, the number of drug overdose deaths in Arkansas, a majority of
6 which are due to the misuse of prescription drugs, has more than doubled
7 since 1999 when the rate was four and four-tenths (4.4) per one hundred
8 thousand (100,000) people; and
9

10 WHEREAS, in 2017, four hundred and forty-six (446) deaths occurred in
11 Arkansas as a result of all types of drug overdoses; and
12

13 WHEREAS, the General Assembly has a duty to ensure the safety of the
14 citizens of this state, promote responsible prescribing and dispensing of
15 prescription drugs, and help those struggling to overcome prescription drug
16 addictions,
17

18 NOW THEREFORE,

19 BE IT PROPOSED BY THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HEALTH, WELFARE, AND LABOR OF
20 THE NINETY-THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY:
21

22 THAT the House Committee on Public Health, Welfare, and Labor of the
23 Ninety-Third General Assembly study the effect and impact of Acts 2021, No.
24 651 which mandates the coprescription of an opioid antagonist under certain
25 circumstances, including without limitation:

26 (1) The guidance or rules adopted by the Arkansas State Medical
27 Board, the Arkansas State Board of Pharmacy, and any relevant licensing
28 board;

29 (2) The numbers of opioid prescriptions prescribed and
30 dispensed;

31 (3) The number of opioid overdoses in Arkansas; and

32 (4) Any other effects or impacts related to Acts 2021, No. 651.
33

34 BE IT FURTHER PROPOSED THAT, upon request, the Department of Health, the
35 Arkansas State Medical Board, the Arkansas State Board of Pharmacy, and any
36 relevant licensing board may assist the House Committee on Public Health,

1 Welfare, and Labor to study the effect and impact of Acts 2021, No. 651 which
2 mandates the coprescription of an opioid antagonist under certain
3 circumstances.

4
5

6 Respectfully submitted,

7
8
9

10 Representative Justin Boyd

11 District 77

12 Prepared by: JMB/JMB

13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36