Opioid abuse has reached crisis levels across the country, with 44 people dying each day from overdose of opioids and many more becoming addicted. Recognizing the urgency and serious impact of this issue on the health of hundreds of thousands of patients across the country, the American Medical Association (AMA) formed a Task Force to Reduce Opioid Abuse that recently announced the first of several national recommendations to address this growing epidemic.

“As health-care professionals, we’re on the front lines of this issue and see how it causes devastating destruction for every life that it touches,” said ADA President, Dr. Maxine Feinberg. “Together, we can harness the collective power of preventative education and intervention to help reverse this epidemic. The ADA stands firmly behind this task force.”

The AMA Task Force to Reduce Opioid Abuse comprises 27 physician organizations including the AMA, the American Osteopathic Association, 17 specialty and seven state medical societies as well as the American Dental Association — all committed to identifying the best practices to combat this public health crisis and move swiftly to implement those practices across the country.

“We have joined together as part of this special task force because we collectively believe that it is our responsibility to work together to provide a clear road map that will help bring an end to this public health epidemic,” said AMA Board Chair-Elect Patrice A. Harris, MD, MA. “We are committed to working long-term on a multi-pronged, comprehensive public health approach to end opioid abuse in America.”

The new initiative will seek to significantly enhance doctors’ education on safe, effective and evidence-based prescribing. This includes a new resource website that houses vital information on prescription drug monitoring programs (PDMPs) and their effectiveness for physician practices, as well as a robust national marketing, social-media and communications campaign to significantly raise awareness of the steps that prescribers can take to combat this epidemic and ensure they are aware of all options available to them for appropriate prescribing.

(Source: ADA)