



# CONSUMER ATTORNEYS OF CALIFORNIA

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## Bill to reduce “doctor shopping” advances

CAOC-sponsored SB 482 helps address prescription drug abuse epidemic

**SACRAMENTO (August 3, 2016)** – A Consumer Attorneys of California-sponsored bill to reduce dangerous “doctor shopping” in California and save lives by putting a dent in the nationwide epidemic of opioid abuse was unanimously approved today by the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

SB 482, authored by Sen. Ricardo Lara (D-Bell Gardens), will require physicians to check the state’s existing CURES database of prescriptions before prescribing potentially-addictive Schedule II, Schedule III or Schedule IV narcotics to a patient for the first time. If treatment continues, additional checks of the database will be required every four months.

“We see SB 482 as a huge step forward in fighting the most significant health crisis of a generation,” said Consumer Attorneys of California president Elise Sanguinetti. “This bill will save lives.”

Since July 1 California prescribers have been required to register to use the CURES database, but there is no requirement to actually consult the database before prescribing. By checking the database, doctors can verify that patients are not already receiving the drugs from another provider.

Some two dozen states already require doctors to check similar databases, and incidents of “doctor shopping” for multiple prescriptions have been reduced in those states by as much as 75 percent. Researchers at Johns Hopkins University and the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are among the many experts calling for mandatory use of prescription databases.

SB 482 has a broad range of support, including the California Narcotic Officers Association (co-sponsor), the Medical Board of California, California Chamber of Commerce, Consumer Federation of California, the California Police Chiefs Association, the American Insurance Association and Small Business California. The editorial boards of the Los Angeles Times, Sacramento Bee and East Bay Times also support the bill.

At today’s committee hearing, a California Department of Finance representative said the department has no concerns about the fiscal impact of the bill, and indeed SB 482 could potentially result in huge cost savings for the state by cutting down on prescription drug abuse, overdose deaths and the devastating societal costs caused by the current opioid epidemic. The bill explicitly does not create new liabilities for prescribers.

SB 482 was approved by the California Senate in May 2015 with bipartisan support. The bill will now go to the full Assembly for a vote.

*Consumer Attorneys of California is a professional organization of plaintiffs’ attorneys representing consumers seeking accountability against wrongdoers in cases involving personal injury, product liability, environmental degradation and other causes.*

### **For more information:**

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