

Drug ban would hurt pain sufferers: Half truths threaten use of Oxycontin

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Re: "National registry needed to stem abuse of 'hillbilly heroin.' " Journal, Aug. 5.

Much of the recent bad press about the drug Oxycontin is based on half truths and misunderstanding. Oxycontin is available in several different strengths, and while it is true that the strongest pills are very potent indeed, the others are about as strong as the long-acting morphine tablets that doctors have prescribed for years.

Anyone who wants to abuse a prescribed medication by crushing it and injecting it into their veins will find a way to do so. If Oxycontin is removed from the market, these individuals will simply move on to something else. The people who would suffer the most in this scenario are the thousands of people in our city and elsewhere who make proper and appropriate use of Oxycontin to relieve severe pain and improve the quality of their lives.

The medical literature shows that addiction has at least as much to do with who you are as with the substances you can obtain. A person who never had any kind of substance abuse problem and who is prescribed a drug like Oxycontin for a legitimate medical purpose can rest assured that the chances of becoming addicted to that substance are virtually nil.

Drug addiction is a terrible scourge on our society but undue hysteria about a legitimate and effective medical tool such as Oxycontin will do nothing to reduce it.

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