

## Policing Patients: Treatment and Surveillance on the Frontlines of the Opioid Crisis

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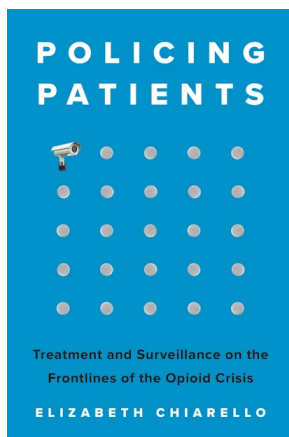
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**HOW TO CITE:** Huckaby A. Policing Patients: Treatment and Surveillance on the Frontlines of the Opioid Crisis. *Fam Med.* 2025;57(X):1-1.  
doi: [10.22454/FamMed.2025.746899](https://doi.org/10.22454/FamMed.2025.746899)

**PUBLISHED:** 14 April 2025

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**Book Title:** Policing Patients: Treatment and Surveillance on the Frontlines of the Opioid Crisis

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**Publication Details:** Princeton University Press, 2024, 304 pp., \$32.00 Hardcover

*Policing Patients* takes a close look at the opioid epidemic from the unique viewpoint of pharmacists and doctors. The book delves into prescription drug monitoring programs (PDMPs) and how they have helped and hindered the opioid epidemic. Elizabeth Chiarello is an associate professor of sociology at Saint Louis University in St. Louis, Missouri. Her dissertation examined pharmacists and their refusal or acceptance to dispense emergency contraceptive pills. During that time, she started to explore PDMPs because pharmacists often were commenting on the opioid crisis, which led to her current research and publication of *Policing Patients*.

This book delves into PDMPs, described as “Trojan horse technologies” (p. 5), that have changed the way physicians and pharmacists prescribe controlled substances. Based on interviews with physicians, pharmacists, and drug enforcement agents, she presents a picture of what actually is occurring in practice and how these attempts to curtail the opioid crisis are being aided or hindered by these programs.

My favorite section of the book was Chapter 3, “White Coat Crime.” This was a very eye-opening section for me because she delves into arrest and prosecution of physicians who are overprescribing or illegally prescribing controlled substances. This topic was something I knew nothing about and is seldomly discussed when talking about the opioid crisis.

The last section of the book discusses options and ideas for policy change and practical solutions. The Trojan horse technologies discussed frequently throughout the book are dissected, and she clearly describes practical solutions to the problem, including expansion of treatment accessibility, a harm-reduction movement, and a reimagining of PDMPs in a helpful, not punitive way. You leave the book feeling hopeful that there are solutions.

Overall, I really enjoyed reading *Policing Patients*. The author took a unique look at the opioid epidemic and gave unique solutions by examining PDMPs and what they have done throughout the opioid epidemic. The duality of these programs as being necessary and helpful while also perpetuating the problem is thoroughly explored. I think this book is especially prudent for health care practitioners because we are constantly having to make decisions about who to prescribe medications to and who not to. The book gives a new perspective on how to approach these patients and hopefully will provide a framework for policy changes in the future.