The group representing the nation's attorneys general is calling on the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to require manufacturers and marketers of generic prescription pain drugs to develop versions of their products that are resistant to tampering and abuse.

In the letter, the National Association of Attorneys General (NAAG) told the FDA, "In our states, nonmedical users are shifting away from the new tamper-resistant formulations to non-tamper-resistant formulations of other opioids as well as to illegal drugs. There is great concern in our law enforcement community that many non-tamper-resistant products are available for abuse when only a few products have been formulated with tamper-resistant features."

The letter is signed by 48 state and territorial attorneys general, the Boston Herald reports.

The attorneys general said they are concerned that generic versions of extended-release opioid prescription drugs and other non-tamper-resistant products may reach the market.

"The letter applauds the FDA for developing guidelines that will assist with the formulations of opioid drugs with abuse-deterrent properties, but encourages the agency to ensure generic versions of such products are designed with similar features," according to NAAG news release.

Prescription drugs are the third most commonly abused category of drugs, behind alcohol and marijuana and ahead of cocaine, heroin, and methamphetamine. Some prescription drugs can become addictive, especially when used in a manner inconsistent with their labeling by someone other than the patient for whom they were prescribed, or when taken in a manner or dosage other than prescribed. Overall, an estimated 48 million people have abused prescription drugs, representing nearly 20% of the U.S. population. To learn more click here.