COVID19 – Regulatory Update

By Laurie Clark – Legislative Counsel

AG Grewal Announces Administrative Order Requiring Co-Prescribing of Naloxone for Certain At-Risk Opioid Patients during the COVID19 Emergency

On May 21 - Attorney General Gurbir S. Grewal, the New Jersey Coordinator for Addiction Responses and Enforcement Strategies ("NJ CARES"), and the Division of Consumer Affairs announced that New Jersey physicians, dentists, and other healthcare practitioners who prescribe opioids for the management of chronic pain must also prescribe the opioid antidote naloxone to certain at-risk patients during the COVID-19 crisis.

Under the terms of the Administrative Order, issued just prior to Memorial Day Weekend, physicians must co-prescribe naloxone to patients continuously receiving opioids for chronic pain management if the patient
has one or more prescriptions totaling 90 morphine milligram equivalents (MME) or more per day, or is concurrently taking an opioid and a benzodiazepine. The prescription must be noted in the patient’s chart.

The order is currently in effect and will stay in place until the end of the Public Health Emergency.

Please be aware that many prescribers may be unaware of this change. The wording of the order does not include any new pharmacy responsibility. According to the specifics of the order, patients are not mandated to fill the naloxone in order to receive the opioid or benzodiazepine prescription. This is not for every opioid prescription. Please refer to the highlighted text above or the specific wording of the order via the link below. We will keep you apprised if further guidance is provided.

Here are links to the original Press Release and the Administrative Order:

https://www.njconsumeraffairs.gov/News/Pages/05212020.aspx