

## DEA Publishes COVID-19 Information Addressing Handling of Controlled Substances

The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) has sent out communications detailing two temporary exemptions relating to C2 emergency dispensing, effective during the duration of the Public Health Emergency caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. In the letter to practitioner registrants and pharmacists sent out on March 27<sup>th</sup>, there are two significant changes.

1. Emergency C2 Prescription follow-up: Following an oral emergency order, the timeline for a practitioner to deliver a valid C2 prescription to the pharmacy is being extended from 7 days to **15 days**. States may have more stringent rules, but federally this is an exemption.
2. Methods of providing follow-up: Practitioners may send the follow-up prescription to the pharmacy via facsimile, or a photograph or scan of the follow-up prescription in place of the paper prescription. Currently, faxing has only been an option for LTC and hospice/terminally ill patients. This makes it an option for community patients as well, along with the photo or scan options.

Detailed guidance can be found in the corresponding DEA letter.

Additionally, to address the issue of controlled substance use during the current COVID-19 pandemic, the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) has published several helpful resources on their **COVID-19 Information Page** on the **Diversion Control Divisions** website. This page contains important guidance concerning COVID-19 and the national drug supply, electronic prescribing of controlled substances, telemedicine, medicated assisted treatment, and other important federal and state information.

During this National Emergency, the Diversion Control Division at DEA has pledged to continue to work with Federal partners, DEA registrants, and their representative association(s) to assure that there is an adequate supply of controlled substances in the United States. The DEA will also work to assure that patients will have access to controlled substances. Please continue to direct all policy questions concerning COVID-19 to the Policy email box at **Natural.Disaster@usdoj.gov**.

**Visit the DEA's COVID-19 Resource page here.** This site will be updated frequently as new information and guidance is issued.