

June 12, 2019

Dear Health Care Provider:

As you are probably aware, New Mexico continues to be impacted by the opioid overdose epidemic that is sweeping the country. While NM historically had one of the highest drug overdose death rates in the United States, this ranking has improved over the past few years due to statewide efforts combined with worsening rates in some areas of the county. Great strides have been made in NM to address the opioid overdose epidemic such as mandatory Prescription Monitoring Program utilization, continued education requirements on pain management, and statewide standing orders for naloxone distribution. However, prescription opioids continue to be one of the leading causes of drug overdose death.

In an effort to address the opioid overdose epidemic and reduce the opioid overdose death rate, Senate Bill 221, sponsored by Senator Soules, was passed, adding new language to the [Pain Relief Act](#). Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham signed the bill on March 28th, 2019 and it becomes **effective June 14th, 2019**.

For the purposes to the Pain Relief Act, a health care provider is defined as “a person who is licensed or otherwise authorized by law to provide health care in the ordinary course of business or practice of the person’s profession and **who has prescriptive authority within the limits of the person’s license.**”

This law will require **health care providers** who prescribe, distribute, or dispense a prescription opioid:

- **To a patient for the first time** – advise the patient on the risks of overdose and inform the availability of an opioid antagonist (i.e. naloxone).
- **To a patient previously on opioids** – advise the patient on the risks of overdose and inform the availability of an opioid antagonist (i.e. naloxone) on the first occasion of each calendar year.

This law will also require **health care providers** who prescribe an opioid to:

- co-prescribe an opioid antagonist (i.e. naloxone) to the patient, if the prescription for the opioid is at least a five-day supply; and,
- provide written information about the opioid antagonist, how to administer the opioid antagonist, and that 911 should be called immediately after administration.

If the prescription for the opioid analgesic is a four-day supply or less, the above requirements of the statute do not apply. There are no other exemptions, such as patients in nursing facilities, long term care facilities or in hospice care.

Should you have any questions regarding this law that becomes effective June 14th, 2019, contact your healthcare licensing board. Healthcare licensing boards are considering adding regulations to reflect provisions of the new law and such changes would be communicated to licensees via their respective licensing board.

Thank you,

Prescription Monitoring Program
New Mexico Board of Pharmacy