New Requirements for Georgia Prescribers

On May 4, 2017, Governor Nathan Deal signed House Bill 249 and this new law calls for increased responsibility from prescribers and places certain restrictions when prescribing opioids and benzodiazepines.

PDMP Registration

By January 1, 2018, all prescribers with a DEA number are required to register with the state's prescription drug monitoring program (PDMP). The Department of Public Health, which is charged with maintaining the PDMP, has published guidance on the registration process. Due to the large number of prescribers required to register, the Department has developed a system for registration based on a prescribers birth month.

If you were born in: Register in PDMP in :

January, February, March July 2017
April, May, June August 2017
July, August, September September 2017
October, November, December October 2017

Physicians will need to provide their:

- Name and business address
- Primary phone number
- Last four digits of SSN
- DEA number
- NPI number
- Professional license number and type
- Health care specialty

PDMP Checks
Additional requirements for prescribers or their delegates to check the PDMP prior to writing an initial prescription for opioids or benzodiazepines will go into effect July 1, 2018. The specific list of controlled substances to which the PDMP requirements apply is contained in paragraphs (1) and (2) of O.C.G.A. 16-13-26.) Prescribers will also be required to re-check the PDMP at least every 90 days if the patient is to receive a prescription refill. The law does provide some exceptions to the requirement to check the PDMP, including when:

The prescription is for no more than a 3-day supply of a covered substance and no more than 26 pills.
The patient is in a hospital or health care facility, including, but not limited to, a nursing home, an intermediate care home, a personal care home, or a hospice program, which provides patient care and prescriptions to be administered and used by a patient on the premises of the facility. The patient has had outpatient surgery at a hospital or ambulatory surgical center and the prescription is for no more than a 10-day supply of a covered substance and no more than 40 pills.
The patient is terminally ill or under the supervised care of an outpatient hospice program.
The patient is receiving treatment for cancer.

Prescribers or their delegates must also enter information in the patient's medical record the date and time the PDMP was consulted and the name of the individual who performed the PDMP search. If the PDMP is not functioning or prohibits access, such information must be entered in the patient's medical record along with the date and time of the attempted search and the individual who attempted to access the PDMP.

**Patient Education**

Effective July 1, 2017, HB 249 also requires prescribers who issue a prescription for an opioid to "provide the patient receiving the prescription information on the addictive risks of using opioids and information on options available for safely disposing of any unused opioids where such options exist." This information may be provided in either oral or written form.

**Delegates**

Prescribers that wish to use a delegate to check the PDMP will need to ensure that the delegate is registered with the PDMP and meets certain requirements. The Department of Public Health is currently only requiring prescribers themselves to register prior to the January 1, 2018 deadline. The Department plans to provide additional information about the delegate registration process at a later date.

Delegates will be registered in phase II of the registration process and DPH will provide more information about delegates and how they may be registered after January 1, 2018." Prescribers practicing in a health care facility may delegate the ability to check the PDMP to two individuals, per shift or rotation, who are employed or contracted with the health care facility so long as the medical director of the facility has authorized the particular individuals to access the PDMP. A prescriber may also delegate the ability to check the PDMP to two individuals per shift.
or rotation who are members of the prescriber's staff or employed by the health care facility in which the prescriber is practicing as long as the individuals are:
Contact DPH at pdmsupports@dph.ga.gov or 404.463.1517 with questions.

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