

IMPORTANT UPDATE FOR OUR PATIENTS REGARDING CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES PRESCRIBING

On March 19, 2018, Florida Governor Rick Scott signed HB 21, a comprehensive opioid bill, into law. The new law goes into effect on July 1, 2018, and addresses opioid abuse by increasing the regulation of prescribing controlled substances and requires the use of the Florida Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP-the state prescription database) prior to issuing any controlled substances prescriptions.

The new law:

Limits the prescription of opioids for acute pain to a 3-day supply, or if properly documented, a 7-day exemption, encouraging prescribers to prescribe only a small supply.

Requires health care providers to review the PDMP history while the patient is in the office before prescribing or dispensing a controlled substance. Failure to do so will result in a series of legal citations to the physician, which can include suspension or loss of license.

Requires that physicians assess both functional improvement and pain improvement for patients who are taking opioids for chronic pain at each visit, and offer alternative treatment to patients who are not appropriately responding to treatment.

Schedule II medications, which include opioid narcotics and ADHD stimulant medications, cannot be refilled. Patients requiring monthly refills will be required to come to the office for a visit at least monthly.

Schedule III-V medications (i.e. some sleep medications, testosterone, Tylenol with codeine) can only be prescribed for a maximum of 30 days with 2 refills (3 months). Patients requiring additional refills after 3 months will be required to come to the office for a visit before the 3 months have expired.

A minimum of yearly urine drug testing is also required and will be performed randomly in the office.

Unfortunately, we will be unable to deviate from the specifications of the law and hope our patients understand and assist us in complying with the new regulations.

If there are any questions, please visit floridahealth.gov for more information on the Florida Prescription Drug Monitoring Program and flsenate.gov for more specifics on the law. We will be happy to assist you with any questions you may have as well.

Physicians Group of South Florida
June 1, 2018