

Vermont Pharmacists Association
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The Vermont Pharmacists Association proposes modifying S.280 or H.611 which, as originally written, deny access for “snow birds” and college and boarding school students from beyond New England and New York. Major hospitals of surrounding states are closer to many Vermonters than is Fletcher Allen Health Care. Even Vermonters with doctors in these states are unduly restricted as it will be impractical for doctors to write a prescription exactly 5 days before it is due and have time for the patient to pick it up or receive it by mail, before going to their pharmacy. The legislation does not permit a prescription to be issued with a future fill date, as is currently allowed.

Our association previously recommended a more narrow restriction prohibiting the filling of Opiate-based Schedule II prescriptions prescribed by doctors practicing in the state of Florida.

It is our opinion that of those drugs dispensed in Vermont and later abused, the vast majority derive from Vermont prescribers for Vermont patients. Conversely, we feel the vast majority of prescriptions from out of state doctors for our permanent and part-time residents are legitimate and appropriate. The exception has been Oxycodone prescriptions from Florida pain clinics presented by patients who claim to be just visiting or passing through Vermont.

It should be noted that Act 75, signed on June 5, 2013 and designed to prevent diversion, abuse, and inappropriate prescribing of controlled substances, is broad in scope will impact the problem over the course of months to years. Elements of Act 75 include:

- Development of standards and guidelines for Vermont prescribers and dispensers.
- Development of guidelines for hospitals to screen for drug abuse and refer for intervention.
- Creation of Pain Management System Advisory Council.
- Evaluation of the quality and effectiveness of substance abuse prevention education in schools.
- Evaluation of potential to integrate electronic medical records with the Vermont Prescription Monitoring System (VPMS) tracking controlled substance prescription records.
- Requirement that prescribers consult a patient’s VPMS record when first prescribing a controlled substance and at least annually.
- Creation of standards for prescribers issuing replacements for lost/stolen prescriptions, including requirement to query the VPMS.
- Requirement of photo ID and signature to pick up a controlled substance prescription.
- Creation of a free unused drug disposal system.

By modifying S.280 and H.611, we hope to preserve prescription access for patients legally and appropriately treated by a doctor from beyond Vermont’s borders. Meanwhile we are optimistic while that in due time, Act 75 will have an impact on the predominant source of the problem lying within our state.

Sincerely,

Jim Godfrey, President
Vermont Pharmacists Association

