



Oregon

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News Release

For Immediate Release

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Hydrocodone Changes – Drug Rescheduling Announcement

A new DEA law becomes effective October 6, 2014. Medications with hydrocodone will be moved from a Schedule III controlled substance to a Schedule II controlled substance. There are several brand name and generic hydrocodone-containing products (HCPs) that will be impacted by this change. These medications include: Vicodin, Norco, Lortab, Hycodan, Mycodone, Tussionex, and Tussion. The reason for the change is to help improve patient safety, as HCPs are the most prescribed medications in the United States.

With this change, prescribers will no longer be permitted to telephone or fax prescriptions for hydrocodone to pharmacies. Patients will need to see their practitioner to obtain a new written prescription or their practitioners can submit Schedule II controlled substance prescriptions to pharmacies electronically, through a secure computer system. However, it should be noted that as of August 2014, only 31% of pharmacies in Oregon have the capability to accept electronic submission of Schedule II controlled substances.

Effective October 6, 2014, prescribers may not authorize any refills for hydrocodone prescriptions. Pharmacies can dispense valid refills on hydrocodone prescriptions written prior to October 6, 2014, but may be limited by their computer systems or corporate policy. A new written or electronic prescription may be required.

Questions should be directed to your healthcare providers. The Board advises that on-going, effective communication between patients, providers and pharmacies be a priority to help ensure a smooth transition, so that patients do not face unnecessary or unsafe interruptions in their medication therapy.