Adding Schedule II Drugs to the
Advanced Practice Nurse Formulary
Executive Summary

EXISTING STATUTE

Currently in Ohio, Advanced Practice Nurses (APNs) with a certificate to prescribe (CTP) can prescribe Schedule II drugs only for 24 hours for terminally ill patients and only when the collaborating physician has first initiated the medication. (ORC 3719.06 (A) (2) and ORC 4723.481 (C)).

PROPOSED LEGISLATION

To amend the Ohio Revised Code (ORC) to allow advanced practice nurses, who have completed additional required education, to prescribe Schedule II controlled substances in certain circumstances and with certain limitations.

PRESCRIPTION OF SCHEDULE II DRUGS BY APNS: PATIENT BENEFITS

Advanced practice nurses function in a variety of settings from the outpatient primary care setting, to the acute care hospital and ICU, to the home, hospice and extended care facility. Many of the conditions commonly treated by APNs require management of moderate to severe pain. Schedule II drugs are an important part of the treatment regime for these patients.

Examples of pain or symptoms commonly encountered in the APN practice are outlined below:

- Chronic pain related to low back pain, neck pain, and musculoskeletal injuries;
- Chronic, severe intractable pain of a terminal illness;
- Intractable severe pain of chronic illness;
- Post-surgical pain;
- Acute pain such as fractures or burns, encountered in emergency and urgent care settings;
- Pain associated with labor or childbirth
- ADHD

Prompt and thorough treatment of pain is important in the restoration of function and promotion of quality of life for these patients. Untreated or under-treated pain can lead to depression, difficulty with self care, difficulty sleeping, anxiety, loss of appetite with weight loss and missed days from school or work. Increased health care costs related to frequent emergency department visits and prolonged hospitalizations can also result. Assessment of pain, prescription of medication and other appropriate forms of therapy, regular follow-ups and re-assessments are all important components in the treatment of pain and management of these patients.

Currently, APNs in Ohio seeing patients with these conditions must consult with a collaborating physician for the prescription of Schedule II drugs. For patients with a terminal illness, the physician must initiate the order and then the APN can **only** prescribe for a 24 hour period. This delays the treatment of patients, increases family and care giver stress, increases the cost of healthcare and can lead to unnecessary pain and suffering. Amending the ORC to enhance the APN's ability to prescribe Schedule II drugs will foster prompt, appropriate patient care in a safe and effective manner.

Proposed Program Requirements

The multi-disciplinary Committee for Prescriptive Governance (CPG) was developed by the Ohio Board of Nursing to develop a formulary and prescriptive guidelines for APNs. The CPG is composed of four physicians, a pharmacist member of the State Board of Pharmacy, a clinical pharmacist, a certified registered nurse practitioner (CRNP), a certified nurse midwife (CNM) and a clinical nurse specialist (CNS) and a member of the Ohio Board of Nursing who is, at a minimum, a registered nurse, would develop specific Schedule II drug prescription guidelines for the APN formulary.

APNs requesting the ability to prescribe Schedule II drugs must have completed additional educational coursework related to Schedule II drugs. The content of this coursework will be developed and approved by the Committee for Prescriptive Governance (CPG) and will include:

- Ethical, fiscal, and legal implications of Schedule II prescriptions;
- Indications for Schedule II drug therapy, including pain management therapies;
- Prevention of diversion and abuse of Schedule II drugs to include risk identification, recognition of abuse, available assistance and methods of safeguarding practice
- Current best practice pain guidelines (Ohio Pain Initiative and American Pain Society)

The prescription of Schedule II drugs **must** be addressed in the APN's Standard Care Arrangement (SCA). This will allow the collaborating physician and the APN to determine when it is appropriate for the APN, who has completed the additional coursework, to prescribe Schedule II controlled substances within the limitations of Schedule II prescriptive authority and the APN formulary.

Review of the prescription of Schedule II drugs will be included in the APN's bi-annual quality monitoring.

Existing Safeguards Surrounding Schedule II Prescribing in Ohio

- Providers are not permitted to dispense controlled substances.
- Only written prescriptions for Schedule II drugs will be accepted.
- Refills are not permitted on Schedule II drugs.
- All prescriptions for Schedule II drugs are tracked "prescriber" and "patient" by the Ohio Board of Pharmacy. This helps to reduce the risk or potential for diversion or drug seeking.

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