



APN and Schedule II Drug Prescribing Frequently Asked Questions

What is an Advanced Practice Nurse (APN)?

Advanced Practice Nurses are Registered Nurses (RNs) who have received graduate education, currently a Masters or Doctoral degree, allowing them to provide advanced clinical care to patients or specific groups of patients. Advanced Practice Nurses are licensed in the State of Ohio as RNs and must also successfully pass a national APN certification exam before they are granted a Certificate of Authority (COA). The COA allows them to be recognized and practice as an APN in the state. There are four types of APNs: Certified Registered Nurse Practitioners (CRNPs), Clinical Nurse Specialists (CNS), Certified Nurse Midwives (CNMs), and Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNAs). APNs (except CRNAs) may be granted a Certificate to Prescribe (CTP) that allows them to prescribe certain medications.

How do APNs differ from Registered Nurses or Licensed Practical Nurses?

All nurses focus on the promotion of health, prevention of illness, and the management of acute and chronic illnesses. APNs, through their advanced education and training, provide additional services according to a Standard Care Arrangement (SCA) developed between the APN and his/her collaborating physician(s). APNs, unlike RNs, may perform advanced assessments, diagnose, prescribe certain drugs, perform certain procedures, order and interpret radiology, laboratory and other tests.

What is a Standard Care Arrangement (SCA)?

The SCA is a written agreement between an APN and his/her collaborating physician(s) which outlines care delivery.

Services that APNs may provide include:

- Assessment and Diagnosis of patients through completion of health histories, procedures, and physical examinations
- Order and interpret tests and x-rays
- Develop a plan of care
- Prescribe medications within the limits of the law
- Coordinate care
- Reassess and revise the plan of care as needed
- Provide family and patient education
- Consult with other members of the healthcare team

Titles of Advanced Practice Nurses

Advanced Practice Nurse is an umbrella term and encompasses Certified Registered Nurse Practitioners (CRNP), Clinical Nurse Specialists (CNS), Certified Nurse Midwives (CNM), and Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNA).

Certified Registered Nurse Practitioners (CRNP) collaborate with physicians to provide care to patients of all ages in a variety of settings. CRNPs may specialize in a variety of areas including neonatology, pediatrics, school health, family, adult, acute care, women's health, mental health, geriatrics, and palliative care.

Clinical Nurse Specialists (CNS) provide and manage the care of individual patients or groups of patients, often with complex health problems. Through their advanced education, they become clinical experts in a specific patient population such as acute care, community health, oncology, women's health, psychiatry/mental health or adult health.

Certified Nurse Midwives (CNM) provide preventative and primary care services to adolescents and women. CNMs care for women prior to, during, and after pregnancy and delivery. They manage and care for women during the normal birthing process and post-partum period and may provide gynecologic and primary care to women of all ages.

Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNA) administer anesthesia under the supervision of a physician, podiatrist or dentist in a variety of settings. CRNAs assist in the pre-anesthetic evaluation and post-operative management of patients, as well as the management of acute and chronic pain in a variety of settings. In Ohio, CRNA's are not eligible for a Certificate to Prescribe.

Who determines what medications an APN may prescribe?

The Committee for Prescriptive Governance (CPG). APNs must prescribe from a Formulary which lists certain medications the APN may or may not prescribe.

What medications may APNs currently prescribe?

Advanced Practice Nurses, with the exception of CRNAs, may apply for a Certificate to Prescribe (CTP). Additional education and training is required. This CTP allows APNs to prescribe medications in accordance with the law and Formulary developed by a Committee for Prescriptive Governance (CPG). The multi-disciplinary CPG is composed of four physicians, a pharmacist member of the State of Ohio Board of Pharmacy, a pharmacist actively engage in practice in the State of Ohio, a Certified Registered Nurse Practitioner (CRNP), a Certified Nurse Midwife (CNM), a Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS), and a member of the Ohio Board of Nursing who is, at a minimum, a Registered Nurse (RN).

What are Schedule II drugs?

Schedule II drugs are medications classified by the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) with high abuse potential. They may be opioids, stimulants or depressant drugs and may lead to psychological or physical dependence. Examples include: morphine, fentanyl, and oxycodone/acetaminophen (Percocet).

How are Schedule II drugs currently prescribed?

The DEA restricts Schedule II drugs by requiring a written prescription (**no phone in scripts**). No refills are permitted.

What are over the counter (OTC) medications?

Over the counter medications may be purchased by a patient without a prescription. Examples include aspirin and ibuprofen.

What are legend drugs?

All medications which require a prescription are referred to as legend drugs. Examples include diabetes and blood pressure medications.

Do APN's prescribe Schedule II drugs in convenience care clinics?

No, APN's do not prescribe Schedule II drugs in convenience care clinics. Convenience care clinics provide episodic care for a limited range of services (sore throats, bladder infections, etc.) for which Schedule II medications are not prescribed.

Will APN's be able to prescribe ADD/ADHD medications?

Yes, but only after formal evaluation of the patient. Current national practice guidelines as outlined by the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends a complete multi-disciplinary assessment and formal diagnostic testing in order to confirm the diagnosis. This would be required before the treatment is begun.

What mechanisms are in place to prevent APN's from over-prescribing Schedule II medications??

The Ohio Board of Pharmacy maintains the Ohio Automated Prescription Reporting System (OARxRS). This system mandates that all Ohio pharmacies report the dispensing of all outpatient controlled substances (II-V) and includes both tramadol (Ultram) and carbisoprodol (Soma). OARxRS tracks both patients and providers and helps to detect patterns of misuse or abuse. The Ohio Board of Pharmacy will initiate a full scale investigation of all licensed prescribers (physicians, advanced practice nurses, dentists, etc.) in cases where there is a concern for inappropriate prescribing and/or individual misuse and abuse. For further information, contact info@ohiopmp.gov.