INFECTIOUS DISEASE ASSOCIATES OF TAMPA BAY

INTERNATIONAL TRAVELER'S CLINIC OF TAMPA BAY

Dear Patients:

This is a letter to inform you of the changes in Florida law regulating the prescribing of controlled substances. A controlled substance includes not only opioids (pain medications) but also medications for anxiety, sleeping pills, anabolic steroids (testosterone), appetite (Marinol), among others.

Florida passed its first laws governing the prescribing and dispensing of controlled substances in 2009 and 2011. Effective July 1, 2018, a number of significant new legal requirements on healthcare practitioners who prescribe any controlled substances will go into effect. Some of these changes will affect you as a patient and also the prescribing practices of our physicians.

The new law is call HB 21 (House Bill 21). In addition to the provisions from the prior laws (see below), these following changes will impact our practice:

1. The Department of Health (DOH) maintains an electronic data base on the prescribing and dispensing of all controlled substances. Prescribers must now consult that data base to review a patient's controlled substance history every time any new prescription is written including refills. Failing to consult the data base can result in a citation from the DOH and even disciplinary action from the medical board.

2. HB 21 amends the statute for treatment of "chronic nonmalignant pain" to add a new section regarding treatment of "acute pain". A prescription may not exceed a three-day supply. If a prescriber writes a prescription for an opioid for pain other than acute pain you will see "NONACUTE PAIN" written on the prescription.

3. An approved "controlled substance prescribing continuing education course" must be taken by those who prescribe controlled substances.

Patients should also be aware of other existing requirements regarding the prescribing of controlled substances for nonmalignant chronic pain in Florida. Opioids can only be written for a 30 day supply with no refills. Patients must be seen every 3 months by a provider and have an evaluation, treatment plan and discussion of the risks and benefits of treatment. You may be asked to sign a written agreement, undergo drug testing and therapy will be discontinued if there is a violation of the agreement. Periodically the need for an opioid if goals are not met will be evaluated. Patients should receive medications from one physician and one pharmacy. Referrals to a pain specialist or addiction medicine may be recommended.

Our providers will follow the Florida law fully and this may result in more frequent appointments for some of our patients, a delay in refills in order to meet all the requirements and referrals to pain management specialists if treatment goals are not met.

Please feel free to discuss any concerns with your provider at you next visit with them.

Respectfully,

Infectious Disease Associates of Tampa Bay