



—R.I. DENTAL— ASSOCIATION

June 24, 2015

Dear Members,

Please be advised that in accordance with the recently revised Rhode Island Department of Health Rules and Regulations for Pain Management, Opioid Use and Registration of Distributors of Controlled Substances in Rhode Island, effective March 2015, **Section 3.5** states the following:

“The prescription monitoring program (PMP) shall be reviewed prior to starting any opioid.”

This means that checking the PMP prior to starting a patient on any opioid is now a requirement. Remember you are permitted to designate an employee to check the PMP on your behalf pursuant to **Section 6.0** of the Rhode Island Department of Health Rules and Regulations Governing Electronic Data Transfer of Controlled Substances II, III and IV (which is attached for your reference.) Under these same Rules you are also required to provide patients a written notice of participation in the PMP program and inform them of their right to obtain their own prescription information, and the name and contact information for the Department (See **Section 3.3(f)**.) Earlier in the year we distributed the attached form that your office can use to provide patients such notification.

While the PMP can be burdensome, remember that the system was developed to help tackle the prescription drug abuse epidemic that plagues this State by allowing practitioners access to patient’s prescription histories for controlled substances as a means to identify potential drug seekers. It does not however take away your ability to rely on your own clinical judgment, training and experience in providing patient care. It is an effort to provide you with that little bit of extra information that you otherwise would not have had which may impact your treatment plan. The important point to realize is that in the event of a patient overdose (*whether it is from your prescription or the one obtained from two other doctors before the patient sees you*) when you are asked why you prescribed to someone taking three other opioids, it will no longer be a defense to say “I didn't know he was taking them, otherwise I wouldn't have prescribed them, the patient didn't tell me.”

You can see why checking the PMP is for your own protection as well as the patient.

Please let us know if you have any questions.

Christy and Pat