



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NEW YEAR MEANS NEW REQUIREMENTS FOR PAPER PRESCRIPTION FORMS

Barcode, serial number required for controlled substances prescription paper forms

SACRAMENTO – The new year means new requirements for prescription painkillers, narcotics, sedatives, and other controlled substance prescriptions that are written on paper prescription forms. Consumers handing a noncompliant paper prescription form to their pharmacist will find they must first return to their prescriber for a newly compliant form before the pharmacist will fill the prescription.

Starting on January 1, 2021, the only California controlled substance prescription forms that will remain valid and acceptable by pharmacies will be those possessing a 12-character serial number and a corresponding barcode, compliant with the requirements introduced in a new state law, AB 149 (Cooper, Statutes of 2019).

The requirements do not affect prescriptions that are electronically transmitted from the prescriber to the pharmacy, or prescriptions for non-controlled substances such as antibiotics.

Pharmacies have been accepting either the new or old form since the beginning of this year, but time is running out for prescribers to make the switch to the new form. The Department of Consumer Affairs is urging consumers to contact their health care providers if they are in possession of a prescription form that does not have a 12-character serial number and barcode. Although there are a few narrow exceptions,

pharmacists will not be permitted to fill any new or refill prescriptions submitted on the old noncompliant form beginning January 1.

ABOUT THE DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS: *The Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) promotes and protects California consumers through oversight, enforcement, and licensure of professions. DCA consists of 37 boards and bureaus that regulate over 3.9 million licenses in more than 250 various professions and occupations. DCA helps consumers learn how to protect themselves from unscrupulous and unqualified individuals, and protects professionals (licensees) from unfair competition by unlicensed practitioners. Consumers can file complaints against licensees by contacting DCA at (800) 952-5210. Consumers can also file a complaint online at dca.ca.gov.*

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