



## Important Message from the Commissioner

*We Protect Lives.*



**Brenda Fitzgerald, M.D.**  
Commissioner, Georgia  
Department of Public Health

June 28, 2017

Dear Health Care Provider,

During the 2017 legislative session, the Georgia General Assembly passed House Bill 249 which provided for several changes to the Georgia Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP). The first of these changes take effect July 1, 2017, when management of the PDMP transfers to the Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH). DPH will continue to work closely with the Georgia Drug and Narcotics Agency, which will retain enforcement responsibilities.

While these changes will not impact the way most dispensers and prescribers input information into the system, there are new requirements mandated by law.

1. Effective July 1, 2017, dispensers will be required to enter prescription information for Schedule II, III, IV, V controlled substances within 24 hours. This will provide prescribers more efficient access to information with less wait time as they make the best clinical decisions possible for their patients.
2. All prescribers will be required to register in the PDMP by Jan. 1, 2018. Currently only about 10 percent of prescribers in Georgia are registered in the PDMP. Prescribers already registered DO NOT need to re-register.
3. Beginning July 1, 2018, prescribers will be required to check PDMP before prescribing Schedule II drugs or benzodiazepines. (Prescribers are currently encouraged to check the PDMP before prescribing Schedule II drugs or benzodiazepines, but are not yet *required* to do so.)

The purpose of the PDMP is to reduce the abuse of controlled substances and to promote proper use of medications used to treat pain and terminal illness. The PDMP also helps reduce duplicative prescribing and overprescribing of controlled substances. To that end, the PDMP will now generate clinical alerts when you log in to check a patient if:

- A patient has five prescriptions or uses five pharmacies for controlled substances over 90 days (Tennessee model)

or

- A prescribed daily dosage of greater than 100 MME (morphine milligram equivalents)

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Because there is a large number of prescribers to be registered in the PDMP by Jan. 1, 2018, we have devised a system for prescribers to register based on their birth month. Refer to the table below to find out when to register.

If you were born in:	Register in PDMP in:
January, February, March	July
April, May, June	August
July, August, September	September
October, November, December	October

To register, go to [georgia.pmpaware.net/login](http://georgia.pmpaware.net/login). You will need:

- Your name and business address
- Primary phone number
- Last 4 digits of SSN
- DEA number
- NPI number
- Professional license number and type
- Health care specialty

Under the new law, prescribers and dispensers are allowed to register two delegates (staff without a DEA number) per shift or rotation to check the PDMP and enter prescription information. However, to ensure prescribers and dispensers are all registered by their mandated date, DPH will register new users in two phases. In the first phase, DPH will ensure all prescribers are registered by Jan. 1, 2018, and in the second phase, DPH will allow new delegates to register. We will provide more information about delegates and how they may be registered after Jan. 1, 2018.

Trainings and webinars will be available on the DPH website [dph.georgia.gov/pdmp](http://dph.georgia.gov/pdmp) to assist you during this transition. You will also find a copy of the amended law regarding PDMP and a list of frequently asked questions. If you have any questions about the PDMP or registering, please send an email to [pdmpsupport@dph.ga.gov](mailto:pdmpsupport@dph.ga.gov) or call 404-463-1517.

We know that Georgia, like the rest of the country, is in the midst of an opioid epidemic. Whether it manifests itself in a cluster of opioid overdoses as we saw earlier this month, or the number of babies being born addicted to drugs and experiencing heartbreaking withdrawal symptoms in the first hours after birth, opioid addiction, overdoses and abuse of prescription pain medications are a public health crisis. Working together we have the power to help reduce the number of Georgians severely affected by or dying from opioid overdoses.

Very truly yours,



Brenda Fitzgerald, M.D.  
Commissioner

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