



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR BILL WALKER

Department of Commerce, Community,
and Economic Development

DIVISION OF CORPORATIONS, BUSINESS AND
PROFESSIONAL LICENSING

P.O. Box 110806
Juneau, AK 99811-0806
Main: 907.465.2550
Fax: 907.465.2974

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Dear Pharmacists and Pharmacies:

Effective July 27, 2017, House Bill (HB) 159 was signed into law. One of the many components to HB159 was the establishment of limitations on **initial** opioid prescriptions written by physicians, dentists, advanced nurse practitioners, veterinarians, and optometrists. Per HB159, this **initial** prescription quantity limitation can be "overridden" by the prescriber using their professional judgment and meeting the documentation requirements within the patient's medical record.

There is **no requirement** that:

1. the prescriber documents their professional determination of quantity on the prescription drug order,
2. a pharmacist or pharmacy verify whether the prescription is an **initial** prescription drug order, or
3. a pharmacist or pharmacy verify that **initial** quantity limitations above HB159 thresholds have been properly documented in the patient's medical record.

Therefore, you may continue to see opioid prescription drug orders written in excess of the guidelines outlined in HB159. Even if the pharmacist, after reviewing the Alaska Prescription Drug Monitoring Program database, determines that the prescription drug order is an **initial** opioid prescription, it may still be a legitimate order. Again, the responsibility for quantity limitation and documentation is with the prescriber; there are no statutory or regulatory requirements for the pharmacist or pharmacy to follow up to ensure the documentation protocols have been completed.

To be clear, **pharmacists have no statutory or regulatory requirements to fulfill in regards to evaluating the initial quantity of opioids written under limitations imposed in HB159.** Keep in mind, this in no way diminishes your "corresponding responsibility" under Title 21 Code of Federal Regulations 1306.04, and you are still required to ensure that dispensing a prescription for a controlled substance is for a "legitimate medical purpose" within the usual course of professional treatment or authorized research.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "L. Holm", written over a horizontal line.

Leif Holm, Chair
Alaska Board of Pharmacy