



Dear Valued Prescriber,

As you know, Walgreens recently amended its policy on good faith dispensing of controlled substances, specifically opioid narcotics. We want to thank you for your patience as we implement this new policy. We also want to address some of the concerns that many of you have raised.

Many of you have voiced concerns about the confidential or private nature of your patients' health information. Please be assured that Walgreen's is a HIPAA compliant health care provider. [45 CFR 160.103 par (3)]. By law, pharmacists are granted access to private health information necessary for them to perform their responsibilities. Any information obtained is treated as private health information, which is held as confidential, and protected under Federal Law (HIPAA).

Under Federal regulation, pharmacists have a responsibility to ensure that each prescription for a controlled substance is "issued for a legitimate medical purpose." (21 U.S.C. 829). To make that determination, pharmacists may need to gather additional information, including patient diagnosis and expected length of therapy. This will be necessary on some, but not most, prescriptions. We understand this diligence takes extra time, for our patients, and for you, our partnering physicians. We want to thank you for taking this time, and we promise that we will be mindful of it. Our pharmacists will not be calling you on every prescription for a controlled substance.

Our policy is new, and we know it has been difficult to implement. We are listening to your concerns and we will continue to modify the policy so that it better meets the needs of our patients, and of you, our physician partners. We believe we can make this policy work, and we believe it is absolutely essential for all of us. Our country is experiencing a serious and rapid increase in the abuse of prescription controlled substances. The safety of our patients and the general public requires that all health care professionals increase vigilance to stem the abuse of these drugs and prevent death and injury. Federal authorities are looking carefully at every step of the prescription drug dispensing process, scrutinizing physicians, pharmacists, distributors and manufacturers. Our distributors, regulators and our prescribers have encouraged us to work with them to enhance our good faith dispensing practices.

This is the goal of our new policy. While we know it hasn't been easy, in today's climate, we felt it was the right thing to do. We welcome further discussion, and we thank you for your efforts to improve understanding of our good faith efforts to better serve our patients.

Sincerely,

Walgreen Co.