



Pennsylvania's Prescription Drug Monitoring Program – Information for Prescribers and Dispensers

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1. What is the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program?

The Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP) was transferred to the Department of Health (DOH) pursuant to Act 191-2014 (ABC-MAP). The PDMP collects information on all filled prescriptions for controlled substances (scheduled II-V) that are prescribed and dispensed within the Commonwealth.

2. Who is overseeing the PDMP?

DOH is the state agency charged with administering the PDMP. The ABC-MAP law created an ABC-MAP Board to develop policies and procedures for program administration.

3. What is the purpose of the PDMP?

The PDMP is to be used as a tool to increase the quality of patient care by giving prescribers and dispensers access to a patient's controlled substance prescription medication history, which will alert medical professionals to potential dangers for purposes of making treatment determinations. In addition, the PDMP was created to aid regulatory and law enforcement agencies in the detection and prevention of fraud, drug abuse, and the criminal diversion of controlled substances.

4. Are there prescriber requirements for querying the PDMP system?

Yes. Prescribers are required to query the PDMP system:

- For each patient the first time the patient is prescribed a controlled substance by the prescriber for purposes of establishing a baseline and a thorough medical record.
- If a prescriber believes or has reason to believe, using sound clinical judgment, that a patient may be abusing or diverting drugs.
- Each time a patient is prescribed an opioid drug product or benzodiazepine by the prescriber.
- Prior to certifying a patient for medical marijuana.

There are exceptions to the querying requirement. If a patient has been admitted to a licensed health care facility or is in observation status in a licensed health care facility, the prescriber does not need to query the system after the initial query under the first bullet point above as long as the patient remains admitted to the licensed health care facility or remains in observation status in a licensed health care facility.



Second, health care practitioners who are providing medication to a patient in the course of treatment while the patient is undergoing care in an emergency department are not required to query the system.

Beginning Feb. 20, 2018, health care practitioners who prescribe Schedule V non-narcotic controlled substances used to treat epilepsy or seizure disorders are exempt from querying the PDMP.

5. After querying the PDMP system, what are prescribers required to do with the information?

A prescriber shall indicate information obtained from the PDMP system in the patient's medical record if the individual is a new patient or if the prescriber determines a drug should not be prescribed or furnished to a patient based upon the information obtained from the PDMP system.

6. May a prescriber designate another person to query the PDMP system?

Yes. Prescribers may designate employees for purposes of accessing the PDMP system according to standards to be established by the ABC-MAP Board. In assigning a designee, a prescriber must give preference to a professional nurse licensed by the State Board of Nursing.

7. Are there other circumstances where a prescriber may query the PDMP?

Yes. Prescribers may query the PDMP system, according to procedures to be set by the ABC-MAP Board, for:

- An existing patient
- Prescriptions using the prescriber's own DEA number

8. Are there penalties for failing to query the PDMP system?

A prescriber that violates provisions of this law may be subject to sanctions under the prescriber's professional practice acts and by the appropriate licensing board.

9. Are there other penalties for violating this law?

Yes. There are possible civil and criminal penalties for obtaining information from the PDMP system not covered under the law or for releasing, publishing, selling, or otherwise making available information from the PDMP system for purposes other than those permitted under the law.

10. When will prescribers have access to the PDMP system?

The PDMP system has been available for querying purposes since Aug. 25, 2016.

11. Is there a fee for prescribers to use the PDMP system?

No. By law, a prescriber cannot be required to pay a fee or tax specifically dedicated to the establishment, operation, or maintenance of the PDMP. In addition, prescribers may not assess a fee to a patient to query the PDMP system.



12. Is there information that prescribers must provide to patients?

Yes. A patient notice developed by DOH must be displayed by prescribers. [English](#) and [Spanish](#) versions are available.

13. Submitting Information to the PDMP System—Requirements for Dispensers

Pharmacies (including mail order and Internet pharmacies), in addition to health care practitioners who dispense scheduled II—V controlled substances that are not exempt as detailed below, are required to electronically report prescription dispensing information to the PDMP.

When a controlled substance is dispensed, the information must be reported to the system no later than the close of the subsequent business day after dispensing a controlled substance. Previous to this, dispensers had up to 72 hours to report into the system. This dispenser reporting requirement went into effect on June 24, 2016.

Dispensers are required to query the system before dispensing an opioid or a benzodiazepine prescribed to a patient if any of the following apply:

- The patient is a new patient of the dispenser. A new patient does not include an individual going to the same pharmacy, or a different physical location of that pharmacy, if the patient's record is available to the dispenser.
- The patient pays cash when they have insurance.
- The patient requests a refill early.
- The patient is getting opioid drug products or benzodiazepines from more than one prescriber.

Exemptions—A health care practitioner is not considered a dispenser, and thus will not be required to report to the PDMP system, when he/she/it is a/an:

- Licensed health care facility that distributes the controlled substance for the purpose of administration in the licensed health care facility.
- Correctional facility or its contractors if the confined person cannot lawfully visit a prescriber outside the correctional facility without being escorted by a corrections officer.
- Authorized person who administers a controlled substance, other drug, or device.
- Wholesale distributor of a controlled substance.
- Licensed provider in the Living Independence for the Elderly (LIFE) program (LIFE is a managed care program that provides medical and supportive service to eligible older individuals so they can continue to live independently).
- Provider of hospice as defined in the act of July 19, 1979 (P.L.130, No.48), known as the Health Care Facilities Act.



- Prescriber at a licensed health care facility if the quantity of controlled substances dispensed is limited to an amount adequate to treat the patient for a maximum of five days and does not allow for a refill.
- Veterinarian.

Even if practitioners fall under one of the dispensing exemptions listed above, the exemption does not relieve them from having to query the PDMP system as explained above.

14. Information to be Submitted by Dispensers

A dispenser or pharmacy shall electronically submit information to the system regarding each controlled substance dispensed:

- The full name of the prescriber.
- The prescriber's Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) registration number.
- The date the prescription was written.
- The date the prescription was dispensed.
- The full name, date of birth, gender and address of the person for whom the prescription was written and dispensed.
- The National Drug Code (NDC).
- Quantity and Days' supply.
- The DEA registration number and National Provider Identifier of the dispenser or pharmacy.
- The method of payment for the prescription.

15. Assigning Designees—Dispensers

Dispensers may designate other pharmacy employees for the purpose of accessing the system based on standards established by the ABC-MAP Board.

16. Querying the PDMP System—Dispensers

A dispenser or pharmacy may query the system for a current patient to whom the dispenser is dispensing or considering dispensing any controlled substance.

17. Confidentiality of PDMP System Information

The information being collected is safeguarded in both its collection and distribution. By state law, the data is confidential and not subject to disclosure under the act of Feb. 14, 2008 (P.L.6, No.3), known as the Right-to-Know Law. Access is restricted to approved, authorized users identified in the act of Oct. 27, 2014 (P.L. 2911, No. 191, known as the Achieving Better Care by Monitoring All Prescriptions Act).



18. Why Registering for System Access Is Important to Your Daily Practice of Medicine

- When access is granted, you can log on and view controlled substance prescription history of your patient. If you see a pattern of excessive use of controlled substances, you can use more caution in prescribing or dispensing to the patient.
- The database allows prescribers to detect pharmacy errors or fraudulent use of their DEA numbers. With access to the PA PDMP, a prescriber can query to find out which prescriptions for controlled substances were attributed to their DEA number.
- When preparing for new patients, big or small practice physicians with access can query or allow their delegates to query for prescription information on a new patient they will be seeing at a future appointment. This allows you to check on a patients' Schedule II - V controlled substance drug history and look for any red flags before prescribing a controlled substance to the new patient.
- The PDMP provides an important tool to health care professionals. It is intended to serve as a means to promote and improve patient well-being through better coordination of care, and to reduce the risk of addiction, diversion and overdose. It is not intended to interfere with the legitimate medical use of controlled substances.

Additional Resources

For questions regarding registration or data submission, please contact support directly at 855-572-4767 (855-5PA-4PMP). Technical assistance is currently available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and 365 days a year.

For policy related questions, you can reach the PDMP office directly by calling 844-377-7367 (844-377-PDMP) from Monday through Friday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. EST or by emailing

RA-DH-PDMP@pa.gov.

Further information can also be found on [DOH's PDMP website](#).