

Important Changes to the Prescribing, Administering and Dispensing of Drugs for Physician Assistants

The Arizona State Legislature passed HB2250, amending portions of the Physician Assistant Practice Act (A.R.S. §§ 32-2501 *et. seq.*). The effective date of the changes is **August 3, 2018**, unless stated otherwise.

The full text of the bill can be found at: <https://www.azleg.gov/legtext/53leg/2R/laws/0233.pdf>

With regard to prescribing, physician assistants should be aware of the following changes:

- The bill eliminates the requirement that prescription orders from physician assistant contain the name, address and telephone number of the supervising physician. Instead, prescription orders are required to contain the name, address and telephone number of the physician assistant.
- Consistent with the Opioid Epidemic Act, the bill requires physician assistants to obtain supervising physician approval before authorizing a refill of a schedule II or III medication that is an opioid or benzodiazepine.
- Requires drugs dispensed by a physician assistant to be prepackaged by a pharmacist, rather than a supervising physician, or a pharmacist acting on a supervising physician's written order.
- **Beginning October 1, 2018**, the Board will be authorized to certify physician assistants to prescribe schedule II and III medications that are not opioids or benzodiazepines for up to 90 days, upon the physician assistant meeting certain criteria. Previously, the Board was allowed to authorize the prescribing of controlled substances for up to 30 days.

The full text of the Opioid Epidemic Act and its companion bill HB2549, which made additional changes to prescribing and dispensing of opioids for all prescribers, can be found at:

<https://www.azleg.gov/legtext/53leg/1S/laws/0001.pdf> and
<https://www.azleg.gov/legtext/53leg/2R/laws/0243.pdf>

These bills were effective April 25, 2018.