

The Texas Board of Nursing, Texas Medical Board and Texas State Board of Pharmacy advise their respective licensees that the United States Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) published a final rule reclassifying hydrocodone combination products (HCPs) as Schedule II controlled substances. The reclassification becomes effective on October 6, 2014. HCPs include products such as Lortab®, Vicodin®, and Norco®.

All providers who order, dispense, or prescribe HCPs in the state of Texas must comply with requirements for prescribing Schedule II medications as set forth in state and federal law beginning on October 6, 2014. Advanced practice registered nurses and physician assistants may only prescribe hydrocodone combination products when providing care to hospice patients or practicing in hospital facility based practices as provided for in Chapter 157.0511(b-1) of the *Texas Occupations Code* and if registered with DEA and DPS to prescribe Schedule II controlled substances.

It is important for all prescribers, pharmacists, and pharmacy staff to be aware that prescriptions *written* for HCPs on or after October 6, 2014, must be written on a DPS official prescription form and no refills may be authorized. Any prescriptions for HCPs that are dispensed before October 6, 2014, that have additional refills authorized may be dispensed in accordance with state and federal law. The allowance to dispense these refills expires on April 8, 2015.

The Boards of Nursing, Medicine and Pharmacy also remind their respective licensees that the DEA classified tramadol as a Schedule IV controlled substance. This change became effective on August 18, 2014. All prescribers and pharmacy personnel must comply with requirements for ordering, prescribing and handling Schedule IV medications as set forth in state and federal law.

APRNs may find the following resources helpful:

- Information regarding the requirements to prescribe controlled substances is available in Board Rule 222.8, available at: www.bon.texas.gov/rr_current/222-8.asp.
- Information regarding hydrocodone combination products and the new laws is available from the Texas Department of Public Safety's website at: www.txdps.state.tx.us/RSD/ControlledSubstances/hydrocodoneSchedII.htm,
- Information regarding obtaining or modifying a controlled substance registration from the Texas Department of Public Safety is available at: www.txdps.state.tx.us/RSD/ControlledSubstances/csRegistration.htm.
- Information regarding DEA registration may be found at: www.justice.gov/dea/index.shtml.