Filling Controlled Substance Prescriptions 2021

The Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) Office of Community Care (OCC) implemented technology to receive electronic prescriptions from community providers for all medications except controlled substances in 2017. VA is aware that many states now require community providers to issue all prescriptions electronically, including controlled substances. Controlled substances include stimulants, depressants, hallucinogens, anabolic steroids and others.

Overview
Community providers sending electronic controlled substance prescriptions to a VA pharmacy may face obstacles in complying with their state's regulations due to VA's current inability to receive and fill electronic prescriptions for controlled substances. Some states offer an electronic prescription waiver to provide controlled substance prescriptions by paper (or fax where applicable). Providers should check with their state department of public health for more information. VA is working on an electronic controlled substance prescription solution to comply with all state regulations and a new system is expected to be in place by October 2021.

What You Need to Know
• VA implemented technology to receive electronic prescriptions from community providers for all medications except controlled substances in 2017.
• VA cannot currently receive electronic prescriptions for controlled substances.
• VA continues to accept only paper prescriptions (or fax where applicable) for controlled substances.
• Some state regulations may impact a Veteran's ability to receive needed medication.
• Some state regulations may result in an additional cost to the Veteran if filling controlled substance prescriptions at a non-VA pharmacy.
• VA is working on an electronic prescription solution that complies with all state regulations while ensuring that Veterans receive a continuum of care. This solution is expected by October 2021.
• Community providers can request an electronic prescription waiver from their state department of public health to provide paper (or fax where applicable) controlled substance prescriptions to VA.

What You Can Do
• Discuss VA's current controlled substance electronic prescription capability with your Veteran patients and the need to present a paper (or fax where applicable) prescription at VA facilities and clinics.
• Discuss possible cost advantages to filling controlled substance prescriptions at a VA pharmacy. VA medication copay rates.
• Read the full text of your state's law. Many states have different regulations allowing exceptions or waivers for handwritten paper (and fax where applicable) prescriptions for controlled substances sent to VA.
• Contact your state department of public health and request an electronic prescription waiver to provide paper (or fax where applicable) controlled substance prescriptions to VA.

For more information on VA pharmacy benefits: www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/programs/dependents/pharmacy/index.asp