

Professional Practice Corner

What do I have to have in place with my employer to legally issue a prescription order?

In order for a PA in Wisconsin to prescribe medication, a number of things need to be in place. First, you and your supervising physician need to agree that you are qualified to do so “through training or experience”.

Secondly, a written set of guidelines needs to be established. These guidelines can be simple; “PA Smith may prescribe medications as determined by training or experience”, or they can be very specific; “PA Smith may prescribe medications from this list” or “PA Smith may not prescribe medications from this list”. These guidelines are established by mutual agreement between the PA and supervising physician. This is regulated under Chapter Med 8.

Be sure to include the words dispense and distribute in your guidelines if you plan to give out samples: “PA Smith may prescribe, dispense or distribute medications as determined by training or experience.” Both the United States Code of Federal Regulations covering controlled substances and the Wisconsin Uniform Control Substance Act list PAs as providers able to prescribe, dispense or distribute. WAPA has also received clarification from the Wisconsin Department of Regulation and Licensing that PAs are allowed to dispensing and distributing medications.

Lastly, prescription orders must be reviewed and co-signed by your supervising physician in some manner. Review and co-signature can be accomplished in one of three ways:

- 1) the prescription order itself can be cosigned,
- 2) the patient chart can be cosigned within 72 hours (a physician signature sheet at the front of the chart meets this requirement as does physician signature on those clinic notes where prescription orders are given)
- 3) if PA and SP work in separate locations, review can take place by telephone, fax, email, etc. within 72 hours and cosignature of the chart within one week.

WAPA has received clarification from the Department of Regulation and Licensing that refill prescriptions (prescription for medications the patient is already taking) do not need physician co-signature.

The Code of Federal Regulations and the Uniform Control Substance Act sections that relate to PAs, as well as Chapter Med 8 and the letters from the Wisconsin Department of Regulation and Licensing mentioned above are available if needed for your employer. Please call or email – I will forward copies to you!