



MEDICAL BOARD OF CALIFORNIA

Protecting consumers by advancing high quality, safe medical care.

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Gavin Newsom, Governor, State of California | Business, Consumer Services and Housing Agency | Department of Consumer Affairs

AB 149 (Cooper) Controlled Substances: Prescriptions

[AB 149](#) (Cooper) was signed into law by the Governor on March 11, 2019 and takes effect immediately. This bill allows for a transition period, until January 1, 2021, before the new requirement becomes effective that prescription forms for controlled substances include a uniquely serialized number. This bill allows DOJ to extend this period for no longer than six additional months if the supply of compliant security prescription forms is inadequate.

This bill specifies that the uniquely serialized number shall not be a required feature in the printing of new prescription forms produced by approved security printers until a date determined by the Department of Justice (DOJ), which shall be no later than January 1, 2020. This bill also sets requirements for the serialized number, which shall be established by DOJ.

The purpose of this bill is to resolve the issues unintentionally created by AB 1753 (Low, Chapter 794, Statutes of 2018). AB 1753 required that all prescription forms include a uniquely serialized number in a manner prescribed by the Department of Justice (DOJ). This bill did not include a transition period to allow time for prescribers to order new prescription forms. This resulted in many prescribers not ordering new forms until right before the new law took effect. This meant that their old prescription forms were not valid on January 1st and they did not have the new forms yet, which resulted in difficulties for patients trying to get prescriptions filled for controlled substances.

To help get information out to prescribers, the Medical Board of California (Board) released a letter regarding the new requirements for prescription forms in December, following statements issued by DOJ and the Board of Pharmacy regarding the new law and their respective plans for enforcing the new law. Due to many calls received by all involved agencies, on January 10, 2019, the Board issued a joint release with DOJ and the Board of Pharmacy to provide further guidance on this issue.

The Board supported AB 149 and is pleased that this bill got signed into law, as it will help ensure that patients receive their medications in a timely manner.

For additional information or questions please contact:

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