



# IOWA BOARD OF PHARMACY

*newsletter to promote pharmacy and drug law compliance*

## ***iPLEDGE Program Update***

Changes to the iPLEDGE risk evaluation and mitigation strategy (REMS) program went into effect on December 13, 2021. Risk categories for patients have been reduced from three to two options. These options include:

- patients who can get pregnant
- patients who cannot get pregnant

With the first login for each patient on or after December 13, providers must reassign and confirm a patient's risk category. This includes patients enrolled prior to this date. If a patient's isotretinoin prescription risk management authorization (RMA) expired before pickup, they must go back to their prescriber and start the authorization process over again.

Pharmacies should be aware of a change in the REMS administrator. As a reminder, the "switch" pharmacy management system is no longer a method to verify authorization to dispense isotretinoin. Pharmacists can no longer use the switch system for pre-dispense RMA. As of December 13, pharmacists must obtain an RMA by accessing the iPLEDGE REMS website or contact center.

Patients now have the option to present a unique QR code to their pharmacy instead of providing their iPLEDGE identification number.

For more information, visit [ipledgeprogram.com](http://ipledgeprogram.com), or call 866/495-0654.

## ***IDPH Medical Director Update***

At the end of October, Dr Caitlin Pedati resigned from her position with the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) as the state's medical director and epidemiologist. IDPH is working to fill the position and has engaged David Stilley, MD, in the interim. Dr Stilley has authorized all statewide standing orders that were in place (naloxone, coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) testing,

COVID-19 vaccination, etc), and pharmacies should make sure that they have the most current authorized standing order available for use.

### ***Get to Know Your Board of Pharmacy Members***

This quarter's featured Iowa Board of Pharmacy member is Dane Neilson. Dane is a certified technician at NuCara Pharmacy and is the technician member of the Board. Aside from pharmacy, he owns his own DJ business and serves on the Nevada City Council. He was encouraged by coworkers to apply for the Board after hearing about the creation of the technician member position. His favorite part about serving on the Board is the camaraderie built around a common goal of protecting the public safety and finding ways to increase access to quality health care for Iowans. One misconception he believes people may have about the Board is that it is a punitive body more so than an educational body.

If he could do anything for one day, he would spend it on the beach in Nassau. His favorite holiday treats are pebernødders made by his grandma. In his free time, he follows the Cardinals, the Packers, and Cyclones athletics. He enjoys bowling, running, singing, reading about baseball history, and smoking meat. His favorite classes in school were choir and band. If Dane won the lottery, he would pay off his house, set aside enough to retire, and donate the rest to Camp Hertko Hollow for kids with diabetes!

### ***Update on Naloxone and Disposal Solution Dispensing Programs***

The Iowa Prescription Monitoring Program (PMP) continues to support Iowa pharmacies interested in the naloxone and disposal solution programs. Since July 2020, over 1,700 naloxone (Narcan®) kits have been successfully dispensed to Iowa patients with over 225 Iowa pharmacies participating. All Iowa adult patients (18 years of age and older) are eligible to receive Narcan at no cost (\$0 co-pay), and Iowa community pharmacies are reimbursed the cost of the product plus a \$20 dispensing fee for patient education and counseling. Claims are submitted electronically via [downloadable patient voucher cards](#).

In July 2021, the Iowa PMP also began sponsoring a disposal solution program. To date, Iowa pharmacies have dispensed more than 2,800 kits with more than two dozen Iowa pharmacies participating. Similar to the naloxone program, all Iowa patients (regardless of age) are eligible to receive a disposal kit at no cost (\$0 co-pay). Iowa community pharmacies will be reimbursed a \$7.50 dispensing fee to cover the cost of the disposal product and providing patient education and counseling. Downloadable patient voucher cards for the disposal program are available [here](#). Note, Iowa pharmacies can bill for both a naloxone and disposal kit for a patient on the same day by submitting two eligible claims.

If you have any questions about participating, or program success stories you would like to share, please reach out to the Iowa PMP or one of its partnering vendors. Funding for this opportunity

is made available through the State Opioid Response grant, funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and in collaboration with IDPH.

### **Online Pharmaceuticals: How to Keep Patients Safe**

The Alliance for Safe Online Pharmacies (ASOP Global) reported an increase in demand for medications sold online during the COVID-19 pandemic. Many Americans cite lower cost and convenience as reasons for jeopardizing their health and safety. Out of more than 35,000 online pharmacies worldwide, approximately 95% supply drugs illegally. These drugs can range from lower quality and efficacy, to potentially deadly. Along with proposed legislation reform, ASOP Global provides pointers to help educate pharmacists and other health providers when discussing online access to pharmaceuticals.

- Look for “.pharmacy” in the website address (which certifies that the business has been reviewed by the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy®) or verify that the pharmacy website is safe and legal by visiting the Buy Safely section of [www.BuySafeRx.pharmacy](http://www.BuySafeRx.pharmacy).
- Counsel patients that they should never buy from an online pharmacy that:
  - does not require a valid prescription
  - does not have a physical street address in the United States
  - does not have a licensed pharmacist on staff
  - sends unsolicited emails
  - ships medications worldwide
- Stress that medications coming from Canada are not necessarily legitimate and are often not from Canada at all. Many counterfeiters and rogue pharmacies will use the guise of being a “Canadian pharmacy” when in fact they are located overseas, often in third world countries with very little, if any, regulatory oversight.
- Explain to patients that counterfeit medications can include dangerous substances or poisons like paint thinner, arsenic, or antifreeze.

Many patients will also have questions about the COVID-19 vaccine and treatment and are susceptible to fraudulent pharmacy sites. The following are additional pointers to avoid COVID-19 scams.

- Remind patients that the vaccine is free and only available at federal- and state-approved locations. Patients will never be asked to pay out of pocket for the vaccine or pay to sign up for vaccination.

- Explain that vaccination cards should be kept in a safe place and not shared with others, including posting on social media. This can facilitate fraud and identity theft.
- Counsel patients to always talk to their health care providers before trying any product claiming to treat, prevent, or cure COVID-19.
- Discuss the dangers of purchasing fake vaccination cards, test results, or other certificates. Not only is this providing a false sense of security, but the conduct is also illegal and can result in a fine or jail time.

Additional information on online pharmaceuticals and COVID-19 scams can be found at [www.ftc.gov/coronavirus](http://www.ftc.gov/coronavirus) and <https://buysaferx.pharmacy>.

### **Pharmacy Workplace and Well-Being Reporting Program**

The American Pharmacists Association and the National Alliance of State Pharmacy Associations have recently initiated a new program, Pharmacy Workplace and Well-Being Reporting (PWWR). The PWWR intends to collect anonymous submissions from pharmacists and pharmacy personnel to decipher workplace factors and “determine how they affect pharmacy personnel well-being and patient safety.” The PWWR aims to be a voice to pharmacy strengths, concerns, and solutions. All submissions and data collected will remain anonymous and will be analyzed by groups such as the Alliance for Patient Medication Safety. To submit responses, view the survey [here](#).

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