



OREGON OPTOMETRIC PHYSICIANS ASSOCIATION

SB 152-A ENSURES THE PRESCRIPTION OF HYDROCODONE COMBINATIONS BY OPTOMETRIC PHYSICIANS

Sponsored by the Oregon Optometric Physicians Association, SB 152-A will ensure that hydrocodone combination medications (including Vicodin, Lortab and Norco) can continue to be prescribed by optometric physicians for their patients.

Effective in October, 2014, the federal Drug Enforcement Agency has rescheduled hydrocodone combination products from Schedule III to the more-restrictive Schedule II. The stricter rule for hydrocodone, the most widely prescribed painkiller in the US is one of the most far-reaching efforts to stop the growing epidemic of prescription drug abuse. Doctors will no longer be able to call in prescriptions by telephone and patients will not be allowed to get refills on the same prescription but will have to return to a health care professional to get a new one.

Currently, Oregon statute authorizes optometric physicians to use drugs and pharmaceutical agents including hydrocodone combinations that are on the optometric nontopical formulary (which does not include any Schedule I and II drugs). For years now, optometric physicians have used hydrocodone combinations for:

- pain management (ie: PRK, pterygium removal),
- corneal abrasions and corneal ulcers,
- foreign body removal,
- injuries to the eye, and
- severe eye infections.

There is no record of abuse as optometric physicians prescribe pain medications in small quantities and generally with no refills. Their prescription of pharmaceutical agents is limited to eye care treatment in cases where there is an obvious ocular condition being treated that requires pain medication. Optometric physicians do not treat phantom pain such as headaches or back pain.

OOPA urges your support of SB 152-A which amends the statute to include language specifically authorizing the use by optometric physicians of hydrocodone combinations. The Senate Health Care Committee unanimously approved the bill after adding the emergency clause. There is no opposition to the legislation.

Please vote in favor of SB 152-A which will ensure that patients can continue to receive the current quality of care from their optometric physicians without the increased cost of going to an additional health care provider for a hydrocodone combination pain medication.