

APA-1  
Revised 4/2018

TRANSMITTAL SHEET FOR  
NOTICE OF INTENDED ACTION

Control 540 Department or Agency Alabama State Board of Medical Examiners  
Rule No. 540-X-12-.18  
Rule Title: Risk and Abuse Mitigation Strategies

       New              X   Amend                   Repeal                   Adopt by Reference

Would the absence of the proposed rule significantly harm or endanger the public health, welfare, or safety?       NO      

Is there a reasonable relationship between the state's police power and the protection of the public health, safety, or welfare?       YES      

Is there another, less restrictive method of regulation available that could adequately protect the public?       NO      

Does the proposed rule have the effect of directly or indirectly increasing the costs of any goods or services involved and, if so, to what degree?       NO      

Is the increase in cost, if any, more harmful to the public than the harm that might result from the absence of the proposed rule?       NO      

Are all facets of the rulemaking process designed solely for the purpose of, and so they have, as their primary effect, the protection of the public?       YES      

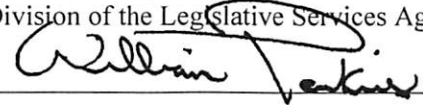
Does the proposed action relate to or affect in any manner any litigation which the agency is a party to concerning the subject matter of the proposed rule?       NO      

\*\*\*\*\*  
Does the proposed rule have an economic impact?       NO      

If the proposed rule has an economic impact, the proposed rule is required to be accompanied by a fiscal note prepared in accordance with subsection (f) of Section 41-22-23, Code of Alabama 1975.

\*\*\*\*\*  
Certification of Authorized Official

I certify that the attached proposed rule has been proposed in full compliance with the requirements of Chapter 22, Title 41, Code of Alabama 1975, and that it conforms to all applicable filing requirements of the Administrative Procedure Division of the Legislative Services Agency.

Signature of certifying officer  **REC'D & FILED**

Date: December 10, 2020 **DEC 14 2020**

LEGISLATIVE SVC AGENCY

APA-2

**ALABAMA STATE BOARD OF MEDICAL EXAMINERS**

**NOTICE OF INTENDED ACTION**

**AGENCY NAME:** Alabama Board of Medical Examiners

**RULE NO. & TITLE:** 540-X-12-.18, Risk and Abuse Mitigation Strategies

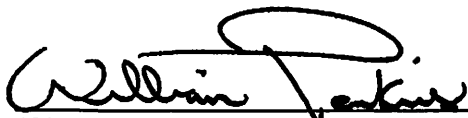
**INTENDED ACTION:** Amend the rule

**SUBSTANCE OF PROPOSED ACTION:** Remove paragraph regarding required CME as this is stated in a different rule.

**TIME, PLACE, MANNER OF PRESENTING VIEWS:** All interested persons may submit data, views, or arguments concerning the proposed new rule(s) and regulation(s) in writing to: Carla H. Kruger, Office of the General Counsel, Alabama State Board of Medical Examiners, Post Office Box 946, Montgomery, Alabama 36101-0946, by mail or in person between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, until and including February 4, 2021. Persons wishing to obtain copies of the text of this rule and submit data, views, or comments or arguments orally should contact Carla H. Kruger by telephone (334-242-4116) during said period in order to set up an appointment for a hearing respecting such oral data, views, or arguments. Copies can also be obtained at the Board's web site, [www.albme.org](http://www.albme.org).

**FINAL DATE FOR COMMENT AND COMPLETION OF NOTICE:** February 4, 2021

**CONTACT PERSON AT AGENCY:** Carla H. Kruger



(Signature of officer authorized  
to promulgate and adopt  
rules or his or her deputy)

**540-X-12-.18 Risk and Abuse Mitigation Strategies**

(1) The Board recognizes that all controlled substances, including but not limited to, opiates, benzodiazepines, stimulants, anticonvulsants, and sedative hypnotics, have a risk of addiction, misuse, and diversion. It is the opinion of the Board that the best practice when prescribing controlled substances shall include medically appropriate risk and abuse mitigation strategies, which will vary from patient to patient. Additional care should be used by practitioners when prescribing medication to a patient from multiple controlled substance drug classes.

(2) Every practitioner shall provide his or her patient with risk education prior to initiating controlled substances therapy and prior to continuing the controlled substances therapy initiated by another practitioner.

(3) Every practitioner shall utilize medically appropriate risk and abuse mitigation strategies when prescribing controlled substances. Examples of risk and abuse mitigation strategies include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Pill counts;
- (b) Urine drug screening;
- (c) PDMP checks;
- (d) Consideration of abuse-deterrent medications;
- (e) Monitoring the patient for aberrant behavior;
- (f) Using validated risk-assessment tools, examples of which shall be maintained by the Board; and
- (g) Co-prescribing naloxone to patients receiving opioid prescriptions when determined to be appropriate in the clinical judgment of the treating practitioner.

(4) The Board recognizes that the best available research demonstrates that the risk of adverse events occurring in patients who use controlled substances to treat pain increases as dosage increases. The Board adopts the "Morphine Milligram Equivalency" ("MME") daily standard as set out by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ("CDC") for calculating the morphine equivalence of opioid dosages. The Board further adopts the "Lorazepam Milligram Equivalency" ("LME") daily standard for calculating sedative dosing when using the Alabama Prescription Drug Monitoring Program.

(5) For the purpose of preventing controlled substance diversion, abuse, misuse, addiction, and doctor-shopping, the Board sets forth the following requirements for the use of Alabama's Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP):

(a) For controlled substance prescriptions totaling less than 30 MME or 3 LME per day, practitioners are expected to use the PDMP in a manner consistent with good clinical practice.

(b) When prescribing to a patient controlled substances of more than 30 MME or 3 LME per day, practitioners shall review that patient's prescribing history through the PDMP at least two (2) times per year, and each practitioner is responsible for documenting the use of risk and abuse mitigation strategies in the patient's medical record.

(c) Practitioners shall query the PDMP to review a patient's prescribing history every time a prescription for more than 90 MME or 5 LME per day is written, on the same day the prescription is written.

(6) Exemptions: The Board's PDMP requirements do not apply to practitioners writing controlled substance prescriptions for:

(a) Nursing home patients;

(b) Hospice patients, where the prescription indicates hospice on the physical prescription;

(c) When treating a patient for active, malignant pain; or

(d) Intra-operative patient care.

(7) Due to the heightened risk of adverse events associated with the concurrent use of opioids and benzodiazepines, practitioners should reconsider a patient's existing benzodiazepine prescriptions or decline to add one when prescribing an opioid and consider alternative forms of treatment.

~~(8) Effective January 1, 2018, each holder of an Alabama Controlled Substances Certificate (ACSC) shall acquire two (2) credits of AMA PRA Category 1™ continuing medical education (CME) in controlled substance prescribing every two (2) years as part of the licensee's yearly CME requirement. The controlled substance prescribing education shall include instruction on controlled substance prescribing practices, recognizing signs of the abuse or misuse of controlled substances, or controlled substance prescribing for chronic pain management.~~

~~(98)~~ A violation of this rule is grounds for the assessment of a fine and for the suspension, restriction, or revocation of a practitioner's Alabama Controlled Substances Certificate or license to practice medicine.

**Author:** Alabama Board of Medical Examiners

**Statutory Authority:** Ala. Code §§ 20-2-60, et. seq.

**History:** Approved for Publication: April 11, 2019. Certified Filed June 24, 2019. Effective Date: August 8, 2019. Amended November 18, 2020.