

The Tennessee Prescription Safety Act of 2012 makes important changes to prescribers' access to and obligation to check the state's Prescription Drug Data base. **For dentists, the changes will not be implemented until April 1, 2013. At that time database checks will be required for all patients receiving prescriptions for all opioids or benzodiazepines.**

- Dentists are not required to check the database for drugs administered directly to a patient.
- **No check is required if the quantity does not exceed an amount which is adequate for a single, seven-day treatment period and does not allow a refill.**
- Refills require a check of the database.
- Prescribers still have an obligation to check the database if they suspect the patient is attempting to receive any controlled substance in a fraudulent manner.
- Rules will be promulgated to provide that a prescriber shall not be in violation for failure to check if the database is suspended or not operational or if the Internet is not operational.
- In addition to the prescriber, any licensed or registered health care professional and up to two unlicensed persons designated by the prescriber may be authorized to perform database checks.

Upgrades to the database system have been promised by the Department of Health. The ability of the database to handle the increased volume was a major concern voiced by TNAGD who worked closely with other provider groups during the negotiations with the Commissioners of Health, Mental Health, and Safety. These administration officials originally called for database checks for all prescribed controlled substances with no exceptions for short-term therapy. Should the improved database prove adequate, the administration may seek to increase the scope of substances requiring database checks.

TNAGD will provide more detailed information regarding these changes as the April 1 deadline nears.