



## **Questions and Answers**

*May 6, 2009*

**Q: What is the Virginia Department of Health Professions?**

A: The Virginia Department of Health Professions (DHP) is a state agency that licenses and regulates health care professionals in Virginia. The mission of the Department is to enhance the delivery of safe and competent health care by licensing qualified health care professionals, enforcing standards of practice, and providing information to both practitioners and consumers of health care services. One of the programs managed by the Department is the Prescription Monitoring Program.

**Q: What is a Prescription Monitoring Program (PMP)?**

A: Prescription Monitoring Programs (PMPs) are systems in which controlled prescription drug data are collected in a database, centralized by each state, and administered by an authorized state agency to promote the appropriate use of controlled substances for legitimate medical purposes, while deterring the misuse, abuse, and diversion of controlled substances. As of October 2008, 38 states had enacted legislation permitting PMPs or had operational PMPs. Each state controls the language of its PMP with regard to how the prescription information gathered as part of the program will be accessed, by whom, and for what limited purposes.

**Q: When was the Virginia PMP implemented?**

A: The Commonwealth implemented a pilot program in Southwest Virginia in September 2003, which contained information about the Schedule II controlled substances dispensed in that region. In 2006, the program expanded statewide and now includes information for prescriptions dispensed in Schedules II, III, and IV.

**Q: What kinds of drugs are in Schedules II, III, and IV?**

A: Schedule II drugs include oxycodone, methadone, morphine, Ritalin

Schedule III drugs include Hydrocodone, Vicodin, testosterone, Tylenol with Codeine

Schedule IV drugs include Valium, Xanax, Darvocet-N100, Ambien

**Q: Who has access to the data in the program?**

A: Prescribers and Pharmacists (upon providing notification of the patient and for their specific patient), certain authorized law enforcement and regulatory personnel (with an open investigation required), and patients over the age of eighteen may receive their own information. In addition, de-identified data is available for research and education purposes.

**Q: What data is collected?**

A: Pharmacies and other dispensers licensed by the Virginia Board of Pharmacy at DHP must report to the PMP twice monthly.

Required data elements include:

- Recipient's name and address
- Recipient's date of birth
- Covered substance dispensed to the recipient
- Quantity of the covered substance that was dispensed
- Date of the dispensing
- Prescriber's identifier number
- Dispenser's identifier number
- Prescription number

Optional data elements include:

- Dispenser's customer identification number, which in limited instances may be a social security number
- Number of refills authorized by the prescriber

**Q: What if I have concerns about possible identity theft?**

A: Although we are not aware of any evidence indicating any personal information may be at risk, we nonetheless recommend that you remain vigilant over the next 12 to 24 months, including carefully reviewing account statements for your financial products and services, and promptly reporting incidents of suspected identify theft to the applicable financial institution.

We also recommend that you periodically obtain and carefully review your credit report from each of the nationwide credit reporting agencies, and request that information related to fraudulent transactions, if any, be deleted from these reports. You may obtain a free copy of your credit report once every 12 months from Equifax, Experian, and TransUnion. You can request this free service by visiting the website [www.annualcreditreport.com](http://www.annualcreditreport.com), by calling 877-322-8228, or completing the annual credit report request form available at [www.ftc.gov/credit](http://www.ftc.gov/credit).

If you find suspicious activity on your credit reports, or have reason to believe your information is being misused, contact your local police department. You should also file a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission by calling 1-877-438-4338.

As an additional precaution, you may wish to contact the three credit bureau reporting agencies to place a fraud alert on your credit file. A fraud alert makes creditors aware of possible fraudulent activity on your account, and tells creditors to contact you before they open any new accounts or change your existing accounts.

You can place a fraud alert on your credit file by contacting any one of the three major credit reporting agencies using the following contact information:

Equifax: 800-525-6285  
Experian: 888-397-3742  
TransUnion Corp: 800-680-7289

**Q: Where do I go for more information?**

A: Please visit [www.dhp.virginia.gov](http://www.dhp.virginia.gov) for more information. The website will be periodically updated with pertinent information as it is received.