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STATE AND CONSUMER SERVICES AGENCY
DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS
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Guidelines for the Emergency Dispensing of Dangerous Drugs and Devices

California Pharmacy Law provides that a pharmacist may in good faith furnish a reasonable supply of dangerous drugs/devices to patients in emergency conditions without a prescription. (California Business and Professions Code sections 4062 and 4064 and Health and Safety Code 11167)

The Board of Pharmacy recognizes that patients relocated from the Gulf Coast to California may have been prescribed chronic medications but may be unable to produce prescription documents for dispensing purposes.

To enable these patients to obtain medications needed to prevent the loss of life, intense suffering or interruption in therapy, the board advises pharmacists to exercise their professional judgment on whether to provide a reasonable quantity of medications to prevent untoward symptoms resulting from a lapse in therapy.

To establish the legitimacy and accuracy of the requested medications, the pharmacist may want to consider the following:

- ❑ Is the original prescription container(s) available?
- ❑ Does the patient have any written prescriptions with him or her?
- ❑ Can a prescriber with knowledge about the patient be reached?
- ❑ Can the dispensing pharmacy be contacted?

Other options to assist the patient can include a referral to an urgent care center for evaluation and new prescriptions, or to the local county emergency medical services center for a listing of available medical services in the area.

When dispensing medications in an emergency situation, records must be maintained that include the name of the patient, the patient's local address, the name of the prescriber, and the name, strength, dose, directions, and quantity of the medication(s) and dangerous devices dispensed and the date dispensed.