



For Immediate Release

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Florida Medical Directors Association Releases Position Statement on Pill Mill Bill's Negative Impact on Hospice and Nursing Home Populace

West Palm Beach, Fla. -- Florida Medical Directors Association (FMDA) released its position statement today to raise awareness over the unintended negative impact that Bill HB 7095, "the Pill Mill Bill," has on patients residing in skilled nursing facilities (SNF) and in hospice. Physicians at SNFs and in hospice care critically require an exemption from the Pill Mill Bill for controlled substances prescribing in order to ameliorate and prevent needless pain and suffering patients may experience as unintended consequences of implementing the new requirements.

While FMDA applauds the passage of this bill and its efforts to reduce and prevent Pill Mill proliferation, eliminate prescription controlled drug trafficking, and set provisions for the treatment of addiction to pain medications, FMDA is highly concerned of the negative impact this Bill has **already** had on the elderly and frail population that resides in SNFs and hospice care. Therefore, an exemption to the Bill should be in place for patients residing in these already highly-controlled and regulated environments.

To further realize the impact that this Bill is having on physicians and the care of their patients, FMDA developed a survey to discover what its members knew about the Bill and how it might be affecting their patients. The results of the survey are very telling and indicate that the new Bill is having a negative impact on patient care in the skilled nursing facility and hospice. Here is a quick summary of what was found:

1. **88 percent** reported that the chances are **very high** that patients will suffer with untreated pain, have poor outcomes, or be unnecessarily transferred to an acute care facility because of this new law.
2. **98 percent** believe that SNFs should be exempt from this law because of the potential of harm to patients.
3. **91 percent** were aware that some patients in FL nursing homes may not be getting their pain meds and may be suffering because physicians are afraid to prescribe these drugs.

4. **73 percent** have direct or indirect knowledge of this bill already causing actual harm to SNF residents.
5. **71 percent** of persons polled were not aware that if a physician prescribes a controlled substance to a patient prior to his/her initial visit, the physician may receive a 6-month suspension of his/her license and a fine of not less than \$10,000.
6. **51 percent** were that effective July 1, 2011, all physicians must complete a comprehensive H&P examination and document this in the medical record prior to starting a controlled substance.

The results of the survey are not surprising and seem to indicate a lack of knowledge about certain aspects of the bill. The one constant is the fact that physicians who responded to the survey are aware of the negative impact this bill is having on the care of their patients.

FMDA President Dr. John Symeonides views the survey results and FMDA's position statement as a positive step forward to gain awareness of the harm that the passage of this bill has caused to patients and physicians, alike. "Physicians who are on the front lines of long-term care medicine are very concerned. Patients are suffering because physicians are afraid to prescribe controlled substances based on the consequences laid out in the bill. We must find a way for skilled nursing facilities and hospice care to be exempt from the unintended harm caused to our frail seniors. The quality of our patients lives and their care will always be of utmost importance."

FMDA's position statement can be found on its website, www.fmda.org.

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The Florida Medical Directors Association represents nearly 250 medical directors, attending physicians, physician assistants, and advanced registered nurse practitioners in Florida's postacute care continuum including subacute care, hospice, skilled nursing, and assisted living facilities, as well as in continuing care retirement communities. The mission of FMDA is to promote the highest quality care as patients' transition through the long term care continuum. FMDA is dedicated to providing leadership, professional education and advocacy for the inter-professional team.

FMDA is the official state chapter of the American Medical Directors Association and a Specialty Society of the Florida Medical Association. It is based in West Palm Beach, Florida.