STATE OF WASHINGTON

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 7, 2006

TO: All health care practitioners with prescriptive authority

FROM: Bonnie King, Director, Health Professions Quality Assurance

SUBJECT: New Prescription Legibility Requirements

The purpose of this memorandum is to inform you of a recent law change.

As part of an ongoing effort to improve patient safety, 2SHB 2292 was passed by the Washington State Legislature and signed by Governor Gregoire on March 6, 2006. This legislation amends the pharmacy practice act by requiring all prescriptions to be either hand printed, typewritten, or electronically generated. Effective June 7, 2006, all prescriptions issued using cursive writing will no longer meet the definition of a legible prescription.

Thank you very much for your cooperation in this very important patient safety initiative. Please direct any questions to your board or commission program manager. Thank you.

Profession	Program Manager	Phone Number
Dental	Lisa Anderson	(360)236-4863
Medical	Beverly Thomas	(360)236-4788
Naturopathy	Susan Gragg	(360)236-4787
Nursing & Nurse Practitioners	Chuck Cumiskey	(360)236-4725
Optometry	Judy Haenke	(360)236-4947
Osteopathy	Arlene Robertson	(360)236-4945
Pharmacy	Doreen Beebe	(360)236-4834
Podiatry	Arlene Robertson	(360)236-4945
Veterinary	Judy Haenke	(360)236-4947

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*** IMPORTANT ***

*** LAW CHANGE ***

As of **June 7, 2006** all prescriptions "must be hand printed, typewritten, or electronically generated." Cursive writing will be considered illegible pursuant to RCW 69.41.010(13) & 69.41.120.

Applicable Laws:

RCW 69.41.010 Definitions
(13) "Legible prescription" means a prescription or medication order issued by a practitioner that is capable of being read and understood by the pharmacist filling the prescription or the nurse or other practitioner implementing the medication order. **A prescription must be hand printed, typewritten, or electronically generated.**

RCW 69.41.120 Prescriptions to contain instructions as to whether or not a therapeutically equivalent generic drug may be substituted—Out of state prescriptions—Form—Contents--Procedure
Every drug prescription shall contain an instruction on whether or not a therapeutically equivalent generic drug may be substituted in its place, unless substitution is permitted under a prior-consent authorization...

If a written prescription is involved, **the prescription must be legible...**

Prescriptions written in cursive are to be treated as any other illegible prescription.