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BAMC prescription refill policy change, state-of-the-art technology improve service

Brooke Army Medical Center pharmacy is introducing two new methods to improve the safety of controlled substances prescription drugs and the distribution of prescription medications.

The length and refills of controlled substance prescription medications is scheduled to change in the BAMC pharmacies.

According to the Army MEDCOM new policy effective June 15, providers prescribing Schedule II drugs will only write prescriptions for up to a 30 day supply with no refills. Schedule III through Schedule V drugs may be written for up to 30 day supply with up to five refills with the exception of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorders (ADHD), which may be dispensed for a 90-day supply with no refills. These changes are only implemented to Army run pharmacies at this time.

“This new policy was recognized by the Army because they want to decrease high-risk medication use due to rates of accidental deaths, suicide and overall abuse potential,” said Col. Thirsa Martinez, BAMC deputy commander for Allied Health.

The following list contains examples of the five schedules or classifications placed by the Department of Justice and the Department of Health and Human Services, including the Federal Drug Administration.

Schedule I Drugs - No medical use

Schedule II Drugs - This schedule includes examples such as Morphine, Fentanyl, Amphetamines, and Methamphetamines and only available with a prescription by a physician.

Schedule III Drugs - Examples of Schedule III drugs include Anabolic steroids, Codeine, Ketamine, Hydrocodone with Aspirin, and Hydrocodone with Acetaminophen and only available with a prescription.

Schedule IV Drugs - Examples of Schedule IV drugs include Valium, Xanax, and Phenobarbital and only available with a prescription.

Schedule V Drugs - This schedule includes such drugs as cough suppressants with Codeine. These drugs are only available with a prescription at BAMC pharmacies.

Martinez suggests that, if you have questions about the new MEDCOM policy or your medication classification, check with your physician before visiting the pharmacy.

With the new changes in the refill policy, the new state-of-art robotic dispensing system will also be in place to improve patient’s safety and service.

“In the next month, we are scheduled to implement a new state-of-art robotic system to improve patient safety and accuracy of prescription orders,” said Lt. Col. Robert Conrad, BAMC assistant chief of Pharmacy.

The system will provide robotic medication dispensing, easy-to-read prescription labels to include line drawings and description of medications, bar-coded workflow management, electronic prescription scanning and a required patient signature to ensure they received their full order.

“With the new technology in place, patients can present their prescriptions to the drop off window and a pharmacy staff member will call them to the pickup window when the prescriptions are completed,” Conrad added. “The patient will no longer need to stand at the counter while their medications are filled.”

