

Consideration of Request for Charge to Advanced Practice Nursing Advisory Committee

Summary of Request: Consider a request to charge the Advanced Practice Nursing Advisory Committee (APNAC) with developing guidelines for the responsible prescribing of opioids, benzodiazepines, barbiturates, and carisoprodol (soma) for consideration by the Board at a future Board meeting.

Historical Perspective: Four classes of drugs are known to have significant addictive potential and are prevalent in disciplinary cases involving non-therapeutic prescribing. These drugs include opioids, benzodiazepines, barbiturates, and carisoprodol (soma). The incidence of non-therapeutic prescribing of these drugs has significant public health implications. For example, the Centers for Disease Control reported that emergency department visits for opioid overdoses rose 30% from July 2016 through September 2017 in 52 areas in 45 states (<https://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/opioid-overdoses/>). This figure does not include emergency department visits for overdoses involving other categories of drugs, such as benzodiazepines, barbiturates and carisoprodol. There is also ongoing research regarding the links between the opioid epidemic and infectious diseases, such as hepatitis C and HIV. These implications are receiving attention in Texas and across the nation.

House Bill (HB) 2561, passed during the 85th regular legislative session, requires all agencies that license providers who have authority to prescribe controlled substances to develop guidelines for responsible prescribing of opioids, benzodiazepines, barbiturates, and carisoprodol (soma). Although general principles of safe prescribing are applicable to prescribing of these classes of drugs, there are additional considerations that providers should recognize. Guidelines for the safe prescribing of opioids and similar drugs already exist from entities such as the Centers for Disease Control and other nationally recognized organizations, and it is anticipated that these guidelines will be used to support guideline development as required by HB 2561. Staff is requesting that the APNAC be charged with reviewing existing national guidelines and making recommendations regarding appropriate guidelines for APRNs who order and prescribe these drugs in the state of Texas. The APNAC's recommendation will be brought to the Board for approval at a future Board meeting.

Pros: Charging the APNAC with developing guidelines for responsible prescribing of certain categories of drugs will allow the Board to receive input from stakeholders who are engaged in ordering and prescribing those drugs in clinical practice. Committee members' input will provide the Board with the opportunity to discuss the implications of the guidelines across varying patient care situations and settings.

Cons: None noted

Staff Recommendation: Move to charge the Advanced Practice Nursing Advisory Committee with developing guidelines for the responsible prescribing of opioids, benzodiazepines, barbiturates, and carisoprodol (soma) for consideration by the Board at a future Board meeting.