

## BACKGROUND

In response to the opioid epidemic, attention to identification laws has increased due to their potential role in decreasing diversion and abuse of controlled substances. Prescription identification laws allow or require pharmacists to ask patients for their personal identification prior to dispensing prescription drugs.

Excessive prescribing of opioids has been a driving factor in the increase in drug overdose deaths. With more than 70,200 drug overdose deaths in the United States in 2017, states are using a variety of methods to combat the growing opioid epidemic. Implementing or bolstering existing prescription identification laws aims to reduce the number of individuals who may be fraudulently obtaining someone else's medication. Prescription identification laws work to ensure the right patients are receiving the right dosage of medication under the right circumstances.

## WHAT IS PENNSYLVANIA DOING?

Currently, Pennsylvania does not require pharmacists to check patient identification prior to dispensing prescription drugs. However, pharmacists may access dispensing and prescribing data on individual patients via the state Prescription Drug Monitoring Program (PDMP). As noted on [PA.gov](http://PA.gov), "collecting patient ID information is not legally required at this time. However, dispensers are permitted to collect IDs from patients if they so choose."

## WHAT ARE OTHER STATES DOING?

According to a [CDC report](#) published in June of 2013, 25 states have laws requiring or allowing pharmacists to request identification prior to dispensing prescription drugs. Of these 25 states, the report characterized 23 states' laws as requiring pharmacists to check identification only in certain legislatively designated circumstances. In March 2016, the [National Alliance for Model State Drug Laws](#) indicated that 35 states have some type of prescription identification law.

There are notable variations in identification laws across states. Some laws are considerably more stringent. For example, in Delaware, pharmacists are required to check photo identification before dispensing all controlled substances, and photo identification must be in the form of a driver's license, a Delaware ID card, or a U.S. Passport. Alternatively, in Illinois, pharmacies are only required to maintain a policy regarding whether a form of identification, if any, is necessary for an individual to receive a prescription. Some states require identification for dispensation of all controlled substances, while identification laws in other states only apply to a subset of controlled substances.