

David Scott

From: Steven Dobson <stevendobsonod@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 19, 2014 11:40 PM
To: Sen. Donny Olson
Cc: Jerry Mackie; David Karpik; Lisa Johnson; victoria_blower@hotmail.com; Andrea Eberle; Jim Falconer; JEFFREY GONNASON
Subject: Senate Bill 162

Dear Senator Olson,

First of all I want to thank you for your support and sponsorship of SB 162.

As you are well aware, optometrist's in Alaska are currently authorized to prescribe a very limited quantity (up to a maximum of only four days) of hydrocodone containing compounds and also only for the management of acute, severe, ocular pain, due to injuries and or infections of the eye and surrounding ocular tissue. Currently, hydrocodone is a schedule "three" controlled substance. Recently, the federal government has recommended hydrocodone be re-classified from a schedule "three" to a schedule "two" controlled substance in an effort to reduce abuse. Clearly, the potential for abuse is with "chronic" long term/recurrent pain management conditions. Currently, optometrist's in Alaska are authorized to prescribe schedules three, four, and five.

SB 162 would allow optometrists throughout Alaska to continue prescribing hydrocodone containing compounds for a limited period(maximum four days) and for limited use(pain management for ocular/surrounding tissues) without expanding their current scope of practice.

Even though the need for prescribing hydrocodone containing compounds is infrequent in most optometric practices, I am reminded from time to time how such medication is a godsend to those patients who suffer from a significant injury or infection resulting in extreme ocular pain. I recall one of my female patients who presented with a large, deep corneal fingernail abrasion received from her 16 month old daughter. I had to anesthetize the eye so she could stop crying, open her eyes to allow me to examine. She then went on to explain what had happened. Her first comments were... " I have delivered three of my own babies, and that pain was nothing compared to the pain I am currently feeling from this injury to my eye". Needless to say, aside from antibiotics, patching and follow up for the next several days, she benefited tremendously from a three-four day course of a hydrocodone containing medication to help manage the pain and allow her to sleep while healing.

Again, on behalf of all Alaskans throughout our state who may be in need of urgent optometric eyecare services--thank you for your support of SB162.

Sincerely,

Steven Dobson, O.D.
President-elect, Alaska Optometric Association