

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 7, 2011

Contact: DOH Office of Communications

Nancy Blum, (850) 245-4111

STATE SURGEON GENERAL ISSUES A SUPPLEMENTAL ORDER TO PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY DECLARATION

- Supplemental language suspends requirement for practitioners to use counterfeit proof prescription pads for 60 days –

TALLAHASSEE – In order to minimize unintended consequences of House Bill 7095, State Health Officer and Surgeon General, Dr. Frank Farmer today issued a supplemental order to his previously issued statewide public health emergency declaration. The supplemental order suspends the requirement for health care practitioners to use the Florida Department of Health (DOH) approved counterfeit proof prescription pads for any controlled substance as defined in Chapter 893 of the Florida Statutes, to run concurrent with the July 1, 2011 declaration.

Over the last several days, DOH has received phone calls from practitioners and patients stating that pharmacies have refused to fill otherwise-legitimate prescriptions for controlled substances because the prescriptions were not written on the approved counterfeit proof prescription pads. Currently, as many as 50,000 Florida-licensed physicians prescribe controlled substances to treat their patients' medical needs.

"Once we began learning of the unintended consequences to law-abiding doctors and patients with legitimate health care needs, we knew we needed to take action to prevent substantial injury or harm to patients," said Dr. Frank Farmer. "Issuing the supplemental order, provides practitioners the time needed to order the necessary prescription pads to ensure public safety over the long term."

On June 15, 2011, DOH's Division of Medical Quality Assurance published, on its website, a list of approved vendors from which practitioners can purchase the prescription pads. As of today, there are 91 DOH approved vendors on the website. The Division is actively working with the printing industry to increase the vendor list, to make certain each region of the state has an adequate number of participating printers. Any printer interested in becoming an approved vendor can download the application on DOH's website.

"As a licensed practitioner myself, I understand the complexities of running a medical practice," Dr. Farmer added. "But in the interest of public health and safety to stop the abuse of prescription drugs, I urge all of Florida's licensed health care practitioners to visit DOH's website and order the counterfeit proof prescription pads."

Visit DOH's website at <http://www.doh.state.fl.us/mqa/counterfeit-proof.html> for a listing of approved vendors, instructions on becoming a vendor, and answers to frequently asked questions regarding counterfeit-proof prescription pads. [View the supplemental order.](#) Practitioners with additional questions can call DOH's Division of Medical Quality Assurance Customer Contact Center at (850) 488-0595 or email MQAOperations@doh.state.fl.us.