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Atlanta, Georgia 30303-3142
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14 December 2016

Dr. Mike Faulk, Chairman
Georgia Board of Pharmacy
2 Peachtree Street, N.W.
Atlanta, GA 30303

RE: Removal of Opioid Antagonists from Schedule of Dangerous Drugs

Dear Dr. Faulk:

In recent years, there has been a steady and sharp increase in the number of overdoses and deaths due to both prescription and illegal forms of opioid drugs. The situation poses an imminent threat to the public health, safety, and welfare, and may legitimately be termed a public health emergency.

The timely administration of opioid antagonists, such as naloxone, is a powerful weapon in the fight against opioid abuse. However, the presence of such drugs on the “dangerous drug” list, and the requirement of a prescription, hampers its availability and widespread use.

Recently, the General Assembly enacted and Governor Deal signed into law Code Section 26-4-116.2, which broadened the power of physicians and pharmacists to make opioid antagonists available to first responders, pain management clinics, and other persons in a position to assist persons at risk of overdose. Your Board has the power to remove opioid antagonists from the dangerous drug list, and to designate particular antagonists that could be dispensed without prescription. Those would be important next steps in the fight against this epidemic. I am writing in my capacity as Georgia’s State Health Officer to urge your Board to consider taking those actions pursuant to its power to promulgate an emergency regulation under Code Section 50-13-4(b).

Thank you for all that you and your Board do to protect the health of Georgia’s citizens.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brenda Fitzgerald MD'.

Brenda Fitzgerald, MD.
Commissioner and State Health Officer

