

FDA Suggests Reclassifying Pain Medications – Ironic?

Hydrocodone products such as Vicodin are some of the most popular pain medications available. They are also some of the most abused. On October 24, 2013, the FDA issued a statement of its intention to advise that Department of Health and Human Services reclassify these products to a stricter schedule under the Controlled Substances Act.

<http://www.fda.gov/Drugs/DrugSafety/ucm372089.htm>

The practical effect of reclassifying these drugs from Schedule III to Schedule II would be to limit prescriptions to a 90-day supply without refills, to prohibit phoned-in prescriptions, and to require prescriptions be written on security paper.

Media and other reports about the number of deaths due to prescription drug abuse certainly support the conclusion that there is a problem with diversion of pain medications. But since I've had clients criticized for requiring return visits to obtain new prescriptions rather than authorizing refills, it is ironic that the new rules will now require these visits.