**COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, HOSPITALS AND**

**HUMAN SERVICES**

**BILL NO.**

**36**

**-**

**0021**

**Thirty**

**-**

**Sixth**

**Legislature of the Virgin Islands**

**February 27, 2025**

An Act amending title 19 Virgin Islands Code, part III, chapter 29, subchapter I relating to

opioids and

requiring that a practitioner discuss certain information with a patient when

prescribing opioids

**PROPOSED BY:**

Senator Marvin A. Blyden

***Be it enacted by the Legislature of the Virgin Islands:***

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**SECTION 1.**

Title 19 of the Virgin Islands Code,

part III, chapter 29, subchapter I, is

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amended by adding section 603a as follows:

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**“§603a. Patient Opioid Notification**

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(

a

)

Prior to issuing the initial prescription of a Schedule II controlled substance or any

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other opioid pain reliever that is a prescription drug in a course of treatment for acute or chronic

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pain and again prior to issuing the third prescription in a course of treatment, a practitioner

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shall discuss with the patient, or the patient's parent or guardian if the patient is under 18 years

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of age and is not an emancipated minor, the following information about the drugs being

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prescribed:

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(1)

the reasons why the prescription is necessary;

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(2)

alternative treatments that may be available; and

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(3)

the risks associated with the use of the drugs being prescribed, specifically

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that opioids are highly addictive, even when taken as prescribed; that there is a risk of

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developing a physical or psychological dependence on the controlled substance; and that

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taking more opioids than prescribed, or mixing alcohol, benzodiazepines and other

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central nervous system depressants, can result in fatal respiratory depression.

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b

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The practitioner shall include a note in the patient's medical record that the

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practitioner has discussed with the patient or the patient's parent or guardian, as applicable, the

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risks of developing a physical or psychological dependence on the controlled substance and

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alternative treatments that may be available.

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(

c

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Subsection (a) does not apply to a prescription for a patient who is currently in

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active treatment for cancer, receiving hospice care from a licensed hospice or palliative care,

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is a resident of a long

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term care facility, or is in the treatment of substance abuse or opioid

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dependence.”

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**BILL SUMMARY**

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This bill amends title 19 Virgin Islands Code, part III, chapter 29, subchapter I by

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requiring practitioners, when prescribing a Schedule II controlled substance or any other opioid

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pain reliever which is a prescription drug in the course of treatment for acute or chronic pain,

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to discuss the risks associated with the use of the drug. A practitioner is not required to discuss

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the risks associated with the use of these medications when prescribing to a patient in active

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treatment for cancer, receiving hospice care from a licensed hospice or palliative care, is a

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resident of a long

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term care facility, or is in the treatment of substance abuse or opioid

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dependence.

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**February 3**

**, 2025/GC**

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