

# In Search of Product Integrity



Protecting the pharmaceutical supply chain with Florida's pedigree law, the toughest in the nation

By Tom Magoulis, Vice President, FloridaInfusion

It comes as no surprise that the state of Florida has enacted the toughest and most comprehensive pharmaceutical pedigree laws in the nation expressly designed to protect physicians and their patients. In the wake of the major drug counterfeiting scandals of several years ago and illegal activities that may still be going on, our state took the boldest of moves. Effective July 1, 2006, all wholesale distributors conducting business in the state of Florida are required to provide a "pedigree" for each and every pharmaceutical product being shipped to physicians. What is a pedigree? A pedigree is a document that provides the ordering physician or the Florida Department of Health a "paper trail" that follows a product's journey from the manufacturer through the distributor or wholesaler to its ultimate destination, you the physician.

The pedigree contains important information including NDC, product

description, number of units sold and perhaps **most importantly the lot number and expiration date.** This information allows the physician as well as government agencies and concerned others to trace the product all the way back to its origin, the manufacturer.

We at FloridaInfusion support this law 100%. It does, however, present us with a new set of challenges. We have had to essentially create a whole new warehouse and inventory management system that will allow us to capture the information necessary to provide you with the pedigree. Bar codes imbedded with information, databases, RFID technology, unique serial numbers in addition to NDC numbers, programming, additional personnel, interfacing with Pharma company channel people, the Department of Health, and attorneys are a number of the issues we are wrestling with as we speak. Oh yes, there is a significant investment necessary. We have

made the investment and are well ahead of the July commencement date. We are pleased at what we have accomplished in a short time and look forward to rolling out our program to you in the near future.

Having said all that, I repeat that we support this effort 100%. We believe it is important that our customers and their patients know that when they buy a product from FloridaInfusion they are receiving pure and unadulterated products that were purchased directly from the manufacturer. I should also mention that while Florida is the first state to enact such legislation, many states are lined up with similar laws aimed at protecting their citizens. After all, do any of us deserve less? **OA**

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