



**THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH NOTICE OF
INTENT TO TAKE FINAL RULEMAKING ACTION TO ADOPT STANDARDS OF
TREATMENT AND CARE FOR PATIENTS AFFLICTED WITH CHRONIC PAIN**

The Director of the Department of Health of the District of Columbia recently published a notice of his intent to take final rulemaking action to adopt standards of treatment and care for patients afflicted with chronic pain. The amendments to Chapter 46 of Title 17 of the District of Columbia Municipal Regulations were published on October 21, 2005, and the Director will take final rulemaking action in mid to late November 2005.

The standards set guidelines for the legitimate use of controlled substances for the treatment of chronic pain based on a complete medical evaluation by a licensed physician. The physician shall determine a patient's current condition, past history, including a history of substance abuse if applicable, and the presence of recognized medical indicators for the use of a controlled substance. A written treatment plan must include objectives, further diagnostic evaluations or other treatments, and a plan for adjusting drug therapy to the individual patient's needs. The physician must discuss the risks and benefits of the use of the controlled substances with the patient (or surrogate or guardian), and have a written agreement with the patient on the use, limitations and necessary testing if the possibility of substance abuse is indicated. Accurate and complete records are to be maintained, and the rules provide a minimum for records that shall be kept.

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Susan Phillips
Jackson & Campbell, P.C.
1120 Twentieth Street, N.W.
South Tower
Washington, DC 20036-3437
Phone: (202) 457-1626
Fax: (202) 457-1679
E-mail: sphillips@jackscamp.com
Web Site <http://www.jackscamp.com>

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