

# COVID-19 Emergency Update: Physicians Can Prescribe Controlled Substances via Telemedicine

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Under the [Ryan Haight Act](#), healthcare providers must usually conduct an in-person examination before prescribing controlled substances, such as opioids, via the internet (including telehealth or telemedicine). However, as a result of the [Public Health Emergency Declaration](#), the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) issued a statement clarifying that—for the duration of the Public Health Emergency—DEA-registered practitioners utilizing telehealth or telemedicine solutions do not need to conduct an in-person examination to prescribe Schedule II-V controlled substances so long as:

- The prescription is issued for a legitimate medical purpose by a practitioner acting in the usual course of his/her professional practice;
- The telemedicine communication is conducted using an audio-visual, real-time, two-way interactive communication system; and
- The practitioner is acting in accordance with applicable federal and state laws.

If the practitioner satisfies these requirements, the practitioner may issue the prescription using any of the prescribing methods currently available and in the manner set forth in DEA regulations. This means the practitioner may issue a prescription either electronically (for schedules II-V) or by calling in an emergency schedule II prescription to the pharmacy, or by calling in a schedule III-V prescription to the pharmacy.

This exception is only for the duration of the public health emergency declared as a result of COVID-19.

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