

ACT NO. 8987

BILL NO. 36-0021

THIRTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

Regular Session

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

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Be it enacted by the Legislature of the Virgin Islands:

SECTION 1. Title 19 of the Virgin Islands Code, part III, chapter 29, subchapter I is amended by adding section 603a as follows:

“§ 603a. Patient Opioid Notification

(a) Prior to issuing the initial prescription of a Schedule II controlled substance or any other opioid pain reliever that is a prescription drug in a course of treatment for acute or chronic pain and again prior to issuing the second prescription in a course of treatment, a practitioner shall discuss with the patient, the patient's parent or guardian if the patient is under 18 years of age and is not an emancipated minor or the patient's caregiver, the following information about the drugs being prescribed:

- (1) the reasons why the prescription is necessary;
- (2) alternative treatments that may be available; and

(3) the risks associated with the use of the drugs being prescribed, specifically that opioids are highly addictive, even when taken as prescribed; that there is a risk of developing a physical or psychological dependence on the controlled substance; and that taking more opioids than prescribed, or mixing alcohol, benzodiazepines and other central nervous system depressants, can result in fatal respiratory depression.

(b) The practitioner shall include a note in the patient's medical record that the practitioner has discussed with the patient, the patient's parent or guardian or the patient's caregiver, as applicable, the risks of developing a physical or psychological dependence on the controlled substance and alternative treatments that may be available.

(c) Subsection (a) shall not apply to a patient who is receiving hospice care from a licensed hospice care provider or is under palliative care for a terminal illness.

Thus passed by the Legislature of the Virgin Islands on June 4, 2025.

Witness our Hands and Seal of the Legislature of the Virgin Islands this 5th day of June, A.D., 2025.



A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Milton E. Potter".

Milton E. Potter
President

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Avery L. Lewis".

Avery L. Lewis
Secretary



Bill No. 36- 0021 is hereby approved.

**Witness my hand and the Seal of the Government of
the United States Virgin Islands at Charlotte Amalie,
St. Thomas, this 13th day of June, 2025 A.D.**


**Albert Bryan Jr.
Governor**