

RCW 69.41.030 Sale, delivery, possession, or use of legend drug without prescription or order prohibited—Exceptions—Penalty—Referral to assessment and services. (Effective until June 30, 2027.) (1) It shall be unlawful for any person to sell or deliver any legend drug, or knowingly possess any legend drug, or knowingly use any legend drug in a public place, except upon the order or prescription of a physician under chapter 18.71 RCW, an osteopathic physician and surgeon under chapter 18.57 RCW, an optometrist licensed under chapter 18.53 RCW who is certified by the optometry board under RCW 18.53.010, a dentist under chapter 18.32 RCW, a podiatric physician and surgeon under chapter 18.22 RCW, a licensed midwife to the extent authorized under chapter 18.50 RCW, a veterinarian under chapter 18.92 RCW, a commissioned medical or dental officer in the United States armed forces or public health service in the discharge of his or her official duties, a duly licensed physician or dentist employed by the veterans administration in the discharge of his or her official duties, a registered nurse or *advanced registered nurse practitioner under chapter 18.79 RCW when authorized by the board of nursing, a pharmacist licensed under chapter 18.64 RCW to the extent permitted by drug therapy guidelines or protocols established under RCW 18.64.011 and authorized by the commission and approved by a practitioner authorized to prescribe drugs, a physician assistant under chapter 18.71A RCW when authorized by the Washington medical commission, or any of the following professionals in any province of Canada that shares a common border with the state of Washington or in any state of the United States: A physician licensed to practice medicine and surgery or a physician licensed to practice osteopathic medicine and surgery, a dentist licensed to practice dentistry, a podiatric physician and surgeon licensed to practice podiatric medicine and surgery, a licensed *advanced registered nurse practitioner, a licensed physician assistant, or a veterinarian licensed to practice veterinary medicine: PROVIDED, HOWEVER, That the above provisions shall not apply to sale, delivery, or possession by drug wholesalers or drug manufacturers, or their agents or employees, or to any practitioner acting within the scope of his or her license, or to a common or contract carrier or warehouse operator, or any employee thereof, whose possession of any legend drug is in the usual course of business or employment: PROVIDED FURTHER, That nothing in this chapter or chapter 18.64 RCW shall prevent a family planning clinic that is under contract with the health care authority from selling, delivering, possessing, and dispensing commercially prepackaged oral contraceptives prescribed by authorized, licensed health care practitioners: PROVIDED FURTHER, That nothing in this chapter prohibits possession or delivery of legend drugs by an authorized collector or other person participating in the operation of a drug take-back program authorized in chapter 69.48 RCW.

(2) (a) A violation of this section involving the sale, delivery, or possession with intent to sell or deliver is a class B felony punishable according to chapter 9A.20 RCW.

(b) A violation of this section involving knowing possession is a misdemeanor. The prosecutor is encouraged to divert such cases for assessment, treatment, or other services.

(c) A violation of this section involving knowing use in a public place is a misdemeanor. The prosecutor is encouraged to divert such cases for assessment, treatment, or other services.

(d) No person may be charged with both knowing possession and knowing use in a public place under this section relating to the same course of conduct.

(e) In lieu of jail booking and referral to the prosecutor for a violation of this section involving knowing possession, or knowing use in a public place, law enforcement is encouraged to offer a referral to assessment and services available under RCW 10.31.110 or other program or entity responsible for receiving referrals in lieu of legal system involvement, which may include, but are not limited to, arrest and jail alternative programs established under RCW 36.28A.450, law enforcement assisted diversion programs established under RCW 71.24.589, and the recovery navigator program established under RCW 71.24.115.

(3) For the purposes of this section, "public place" has the same meaning as defined in RCW 66.04.010, but the exclusions in RCW 66.04.011 do not apply.

(4) For the purposes of this section, "use any legend drug" means to introduce the drug into the human body by injection, inhalation, ingestion, or any other means. [2024 c 102 s 2; 2023 sp.s. c 1 s 4; (2021 c 311 s 12 expired July 1, 2023); (2021 c 311 s 11 expired July 1, 2022); 2020 c 80 s 41; 2019 c 55 s 9; 2018 c 196 s 22; 2016 c 148 s 11. Prior: 2013 c 71 s 1; 2013 c 12 s 1; prior: 2011 1st sp.s. c 15 s 79; 2011 c 336 s 837; 2010 c 83 s 1; prior: 2003 c 142 s 3; 2003 c 53 s 323; 1996 c 178 s 17; 1994 sp.s. c 9 s 737; 1991 c 30 s 1; 1990 c 219 s 2; 1987 c 144 s 1; 1981 c 120 s 1; 1979 ex.s. c 139 s 2; 1977 c 69 s 1; 1973 1st ex.s. c 186 s 3.]

***Reviser's note:** The term "advanced registered nurse practitioner" was changed to "advanced practice registered nurse" by 2024 c 239 s 1, effective June 30, 2027.

Effective date—2023 sp.s. c 1 ss 1-5, 7-11, and 41: See note following RCW 69.50.4011.

Effective date—2021 c 311 s 12: "Section 12 of this act takes effect July 1, 2022." [2021 c 311 s 28.]

Expiration date—2021 c 311 ss 8-10 and 12: See note following RCW 69.50.4011.

Expiration date—2021 c 311 s 11: "Section 11 of this act expires July 1, 2022." [2021 c 311 s 27.]

Effective date—2021 c 311 ss 1-11 and 13-21: See note following RCW 71.24.115.

Effective date—2020 c 80 ss 12-59: See note following RCW 7.68.030.

Intent—2020 c 80: See note following RCW 18.71A.010.

Effective date—Findings—Intent—Report—Agency transfer—References to head of health care authority—Draft legislation—2011 1st sp.s. c 15: See notes following RCW 74.09.010.

Severability—2003 c 142: See note following RCW 18.53.010.

Intent—Effective date—2003 c 53: See notes following RCW 2.48.180.

Effective date—1996 c 178: See note following RCW 18.35.110.

Severability—Headings and captions not law—Effective date—1994 sp.s. c 9: See RCW 18.79.900 through 18.79.902.

Finding—1990 c 219: "The legislature finds that Washington citizens in the border areas of this state are prohibited from having prescriptions from out-of-state dentists and veterinarians filled at their in-state pharmacies, and that it is in the public interest to remove this barrier for the state's citizens." [1990 c 219 s 1.]

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(e) In lieu of jail booking and referral to the prosecutor for a violation of this section involving knowing possession, or knowing use in a public place, law enforcement is encouraged to offer a referral to assessment and services available under RCW 10.31.110 or other program or entity responsible for receiving referrals in lieu of legal system involvement, which may include, but are not limited to, arrest and jail alternative programs established under RCW 36.28A.450, law enforcement assisted diversion programs established under RCW 71.24.589, and the recovery navigator program established under RCW 71.24.115.

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Effective date—2025 c 58 ss 5058-5170: See note following RCW 7.68.030.

Explanatory note—2025 c 58: See note following RCW 1.16.050.

Effective date—2023 sp.s. c 1 ss 1-5, 7-11, and 41: See note following RCW 69.50.4011.

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