

ICHP Position Statement - Basic and Necessary Medication Dispensing Services for Home Use

The Illinois Council of Health-System Pharmacists (ICHP) acknowledges that all patients receiving prescription medications for home use are entitled to basic and necessary services. This includes medications for home use dispensed from community pharmacies, hospital pharmacies, clinics, or other sources. ICHP agrees with the mandate that these services should be provided via a face-to-face interaction whenever possible, but in certain circumstances it may be necessary to use remote means of communication such as the U.S. Postal Service, other commercial carriers, or other communication technologies (i.e., telephone services, tele-pharmacy/tele-health, the internet, email or other technologies that may evolve). These basic and necessary services should include but not be limited to:

1. A pharmacist or pharmacy student will provide verbal with or without written counseling for new patients, existing patients with new medications or changes in current medications, as appropriate for each medication and individual patient condition(s). If oral counseling is not practicable (e.g., mail-order pharmacy), a pharmacist must use alternate forms of patient information.
2. Review of current medication/OTC products, allergy, and adverse drug reaction profiles for each patient in order to assure safety and appropriateness of all drug therapy based on patient-specific parameters.
3. Telephone contact information so patients can call to directly speak with a pharmacist to answer any questions or concerns regarding their medications.
4. A process to handle drug recalls and shortages.
5. Effective quality control measures to assure proper medication sourcing, timely delivery, proper storage, security, and appropriate in-date quantities of drug for the projected duration of therapy.
6. A procedure for advising patients on how to obtain a prescription medication in a timely manner without interruption of care.

In addition to these basic and necessary services, ICHP affirms that all pharmacies serving patients in Illinois shall be licensed by the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation and comply with all Illinois law and regulations, unless a more restrictive law from the pharmacy's resident state or federal law would apply.

ICHP believes that all Internet pharmacies serving patients in Illinois should be certified with the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy's "Verified Internet Pharmacy Practice Sites (VIPPS) Certification" which sets forth minimum global practice standards for Internet pharmacy practice sites.

ICHP also believes that all pharmacies providing remote services to patients in Illinois must maintain and should make available to any and all individuals requesting it including patients, prescribers, and investigators from the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation a policy and procedure manual that sets forth:

1. Normal delivery protocols and times.
2. The procedure to be followed if the patient's medication is not available at the remote pharmacy, or if delivery will be delayed beyond the normal delivery time.
3. The procedure to be followed upon receipt of the prescription for an acute illness. It shall include a procedure for delivery of the medication to the patient from a pharmacy to meet an immediate need (i.e., courier delivery), or an alternative that offers the patient the opportunity to obtain the medication from a pharmacy that can meet the patient's immediate need.
4. The procedure to be followed when the pharmacy is advised that the patient's medication has not been received within the normal time and the patient is out of medication requiring an interim supply until the shipped medication becomes available.
5. The procedure used to obtain a complete record of all prescription medications the patient is currently receiving from all pharmacies including over the counter medication, nutritional supplements and herbal remedies, so that monitoring of drug- drug and drug- food interactions can be carried out.
6. The procedure for generic substitution that includes obtaining the patient's permission to complete each substitution.
7. The procedure for verifying and authenticating the prescription order.
8. The procedure for providing proper security and privacy for all prescription information.
9. The procedure for informing patients of the pharmacy's privacy guarantees and any potential use of their prescription information for market analysis.
10. The procedure describing the pharmacy's ongoing quality assurance program.

ICHP recognizes that the provision of quality medication dispensing services for all patients is fundamental to our profession. The above criteria establish an acceptable level of quality of care for patients in need of pharmacy services. As long as these minimum services are provided, patients should be allowed to select the pharmacy of their choice to meet their medication needs.

Revised 11/2020