



ADVISORY NO. PP-1

[Please file in your ACO Practitioner Manual in the “Advisories” Section.]

Date: January 1, 2008

Subject: PHARMACEUTICAL PRESCRIPTIONS

Medication errors are one of the major sources of potential harm to patients. The following identifies the three most common sources of error:

- a) The use of verbal prescriptions;
- b) The communication of a prescription through an intermediary; and
- c) The illegible or barely legible written prescription.

In an effort to reduce or totally eliminate the potential for error, the following denotes general guiding principals to be used by optometrists when issuing a pharmaceutical prescription:

- a) All pharmaceutical prescriptions must be issued clearly and completely. Printed or computed generated prescriptions are preferred over hand-written prescriptions.
- b) In-hand or FAX prescriptions are greatly preferred over a verbal prescription. If a prescription is issued through a FAX, the prescriber must ensure that all privacy concerns are properly dealt with and that the FAX copy is marked with the date sent to prevent multiple prescriptions being improperly re-issued.
- c) The use of an intermediary or office staff to communicate a pharmaceutical prescription is not recommended. The use of an intermediary or office staff does not diminish the prescriber’s responsibility for accuracy and appropriateness.
- d) A patient’s pharmaceutical prescription may be sent to only one pharmacy.
- e) It is recommended that you write out numbers (i.e. one, five, etc.) rather than use the number itself (i.e. 1, 5, etc.). This is especially true when specifying the number of refills.
- f) In order to satisfy the requirements of the Electronic Health Record, you must print the patient’s health care number on their pharmaceutical prescription form.
- g) When more than one optometrist in a practice uses the same generic prescription form, the name of the prescribing optometrist must be clearly printed on the form; or, circled from a list of optometrists practicing at that particular clinic.