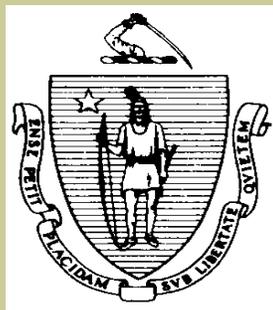


## CQI UPDATE

## FLASH FACTS

DPH



DEVAL L. PATRICK  
GOVERNOR

TIMOTHY P. MURRAY  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

JUDYANN BIGBY, MD  
SECRETARY

JOHN AUERBACH  
COMMISSIONER

Division  
of  
Health Professions  
Licensure

MASSACHUSETTS  
BOARD OF PHARMACY

239 Causeway Street  
Suite 200, 2nd Floor  
Boston, MA 02114

Phone: 617-973-0960

Fax: 617-973-0983

[Board's website](#)

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## The Importance of Documenting Interventions

**Do interventions exist if they are not documented?** Pharmacist initiated interventions on behalf of patients concerning their respective medication therapy is an important professional service performed by pharmacists on a routine basis to ensure that prescriptions and or physician orders are dispensed in an accurate, safe and effective way to promote optimum therapeutic outcomes. Documentation of these “interventions” is almost as important as the intervention itself. In certain cases, the documentation can become more important than the intervention. The documented intervention provides a record of accountability that can be retrieved, reviewed or acted upon at some future date. Properly documented interventions may be utilized to change unsafe practices, correct repetitive faults in the prescription process and change the outcome of a patient’s treatment. Irrespective of the type of intervention provided, clinical or prescriptive, they have the potential to change the therapeutic outcome of a patients response to drug therapy. An intervention is NOT substantiated if not documented properly even though verbal communication may have transpired.

To illustrate the comments above a matter was reviewed by the Board regarding an alleged quality related event (medication error) involving a guardian who regularly requested early refills for a child’s prescription. The pharmacists intervened by calling the physician for authorization to fill the prescription early on several occasions. Over the course of time, the child was allegedly harmed as a result of excessive dosing of the prescribed medications. Following Board review and discussion of the matter, it became apparent that the pharmacists did not document the interventions made with the prescriber concerning the requests for early refilling. The failure of the pharmacists to properly document these interventions made it difficult to substantiate their actions. However, subsequent review of the prescribing practitioner’s documentation confirmed that the conversations between the parties did indeed occur and consequently validated the pharmacist interventions regarding patient requests for early refills. The disposition of the Board matter may have been different if not for the physician’s documentation supporting the pharmacist interventions in the medical record.

Routine interventions conducted on a daily basis should be documented for purposes of accountability and future reference. Interventions can be looked at retrospectively from a quality assurance perspective for trends in practice or policy that require change. Examples of interventions include prescribing practices that involve illegible prescriptions or other quality assurance factors affiliated with safe dosing parameters such as Methotrexate, Coumadin, Insulin and sliding scale dosing schedules (e.g. Prednisone) or Sound Alike Look Alike (SALA) medications and packaging. Documented interventions by pharmacists on behalf of patients provide an opportunity for analysis of this activity which can lead to and support the development of refined pharmacy practices to promote therapeutic appropriateness and optimize safe medication delivery practices.

### Best Practice Recommendation #24

**Develop policies and procedures to document pharmacist initiated interventions to provide a record of accountability that can be retrieved, reviewed or acted upon at a future date. Properly documented interventions can be utilized to change unsafe practices, correct repetitive faults in the prescription fulfillment process and/or change the outcome of a patient’s treatment.**

### Recommended Actions

- Create a system (manual or electronic) for documenting pharmacist initiated interventions.
- Provide necessary training and resources to promote a pharmacist initiated intervention program.
- Implement improvements based upon information gathered from an intervention program.

### References

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