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Pharmacy Facts

MassHealth Pharmacy Program

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• Editor: Vic Vangel • Contributors: Chris Burke, Gary Gilmore, Paul Jeffrey, James Monahan, Chuck Young •

Tamper-Resistant Prescription Requirements

Tamper-resistant prescription requirements are being phased in over the next seven months. Effective April 1, 2008, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) will require that all Medicaid prescription blanks incorporate at least **one** of the characteristics listed below. To be considered tamper resistant after October 1, 2008, prescription blanks must include **all** three of the following characteristics:

- one or more industry-recognized features designed to prevent unauthorized copying of a completed or blank prescription form;
- one or more industry-recognized features designed to prevent the erasure or modification of information written on the prescription by the prescriber; and
- one or more industry-recognized features designed to prevent the use of counterfeit prescription forms.

For more information about tamper-resistant requirements, go to the CMS Web site at <http://www.cms.hhs.gov> The CMS Web site also includes recently updated information that may be of value to health facilities using tamper-resistant paper.

MassHealth has met with representatives from pharmacy and medical organizations to develop the characteristics of a tamper-resistant blank that would meet the federal requirements and be easily used by all providers. Prescription blanks must satisfy tamper-resistant requirements before MassHealth is able to pay the corresponding claim.

To help determine whether a prescription complies with tamper-resistant requirements, three examples are listed below. Note that these are only some examples of tamper-resistant features. Pharmacies should fill prescriptions that are compliant under the CMS rules.

- a heat sensitive feature that will either change color or disappear and then reappear when rubbed (e.g., sensing imprint or thermochromic ink);
- erasure protection, such that the prescription has a background that resists alteration and erasure (e.g., special security paper);
- use of a latent, repetitive, printed word “Void” that will appear across the front of the prescription if it is scanned or photocopied. This feature must be patterned in such a way as not to obscure prescribing information.

Exceptions to the tamper-resistant requirements include prescriptions that are

- electronic, verbal, or faxed;
- reimbursed through a MassHealth managed care organization (MCO);
- for drugs reimbursed as part of a bundled rate; and
- Refilled when the original prescription was filled before April 1, 2008.

Emergency fills are allowed as long as a prescriber provides a verbal, faxed, electronic, or compliant written prescription within 72 hours.

MassHealth does not plan to endorse specific suppliers of tamper-resistant blanks. The Massachusetts Medical Society, however, has posted some Web sites to help providers find vendors for tamper-resistant blanks. For more information, go to their Web site at www.massmed.org/rx.