



Nationwide Scams Involving Faxed Prescriptions

Alert: Be aware of nationwide scams in which fraudulent prescriptions are faxed to providers for authorization. Read on for steps you can take to identify and report suspicious authorization requests for new or refill prescriptions.

Background/Issue:

There are a number of scams being perpetrated whereby marketing companies obtain member health information and use this information to generate unnecessary prescriptions or orders for the patient. They fax these fraudulent prescriptions or orders to providers. The prescriptions appear to come from a legitimate pharmacy and/or Durable Medical Equipment (DME) supplier, and may appear to be requests for patients to receive new medications, refills, or DME supplies. The provider is asked to authorize the prescription or order by signing and returning it. This can result in patients actually receiving unnecessary medication or DME supplies.

Certain products tend to be targeted. Common requests include:

- Topical pain-relief creams, especially for quantities greater than 300 grams (e.g., Lidocaine, Diclofenac Sodium Gel).
- Over-the-counter topical pain creams repackaged in kits (e.g., a livixil pak: lidocaine 2.5%, prilocaine 2.5%, and bandages).
- Diabetic supplies, often in quantities of 100 (e.g., Infinity test strips, ultrathin lancets, alcohol prep pads).
- Durable Medical Equipment, especially back and knee braces.

However, because the list changes frequently, it is not enough to focus only on certain types of medication or DME. Instead, examine requests you receive for telltale signs that they could be fraudulent.

Red Flags:

Be especially on guard when you receive prescriptions:

- By paper fax.
- From a pharmacy out of state from where the patient lives.
- Written for just below the threshold requiring prior authorization.
- For new medication or DME for a patient.