

Prescription Forgeries

“Can you fill this prescription fast as I am late for an appointment?”

The prescription is written for lorazepam and Tylenol #3 from a patient unknown to your pharmacy. Do alarm bells ring for you and your staff?

In many cases, a person presenting a forged prescription will attempt to rush the pharmacy staff hoping that the pharmacist may overlook the forgery. The pharmacist must be on alert if a new patient presents a prescription for a narcotic or controlled drug because the majority of forged prescriptions are for these medications. In many cases, individuals will attempt to fill the prescription under an alias or another individual's name. M3P prescription forms contain a pharmacy checklist including verification of the patient's identity. If a patient is unknown to the pharmacy and presents a prescription for an M3P drug or a potential drug of abuse, the pharmacist should confirm the identity of the patient by asking for photo identification. If not recognized, the pharmacist should verify the physician's signature. All M3P prescriptions must be entered into the DPIN system and that is also a resource to verify the authenticity of the prescription. Does the prescription contain differences in ink or writing or any spelling errors? Is it missing information or contain inaccurate information regarding dosing or quantity? If a forgery is suspected, the prescriber must be contacted to confirm the prescription.

What do you do once the forgery is confirmed?

The pharmacy should notify the police and make a copy, and try to retain the original prescription. If the suspect demands the prescription back, do not compromise your safety or others in the pharmacy. The pharmacist should initial or stamp the original to alert the next pharmacist that the prescription has been previously presented at a pharmacy. Pharmacy staff should record a description of the individual and document the details of the incident for police.

In addition to the police, MPhA should also be contacted as soon as possible in case other pharmacies would benefit from notification. Specific information that would be required would include:

- Pharmacy name, address and contact number
- Physician's name, address, phone and fax number and license number
- Medications on the prescription
- Reasons for suspecting forgery
- Type of prescription (verbal, written, computer generated, M3P, etc)
- Patient name used on prescription

A Health Canada Forgery report should be completed and copies sent to Health Canada and MPhA. A [sample report](#) can be found on the MPhA website.

If the prescription forgery also involves PHIN fraud, then Manitoba Health should be contacted to help prevent further fraudulent use of another individual's personal health number. Manitoba Health – Jeff Rentz, Auditor, Risk Analyst (204-788-6774).

Can you provide the original prescription or a copy to the police without contravening PHIA?

Any forgery as a result of a stolen prescription pad can be given to police. When an individual alters a legitimate prescription and tries to submit to Pharmacare or a private insurer, it is considered fraud under Section 22(m)(i) of the Personal Health Information Act and can be provided to police. If an individual presents an altered legitimate prescription and is either a non-resident of Manitoba or requests that the prescription not be entered into DPIN, then it is advisable to seek legal counsel before providing the altered prescription to police. The Legislative Unit at Manitoba Health can be contacted for guidance at 204-788-6612.

If you suspect a forgery:

- 1) Verify physician's signature
- 2) Check patient's DPIN profile
- 3) Review prescription for spelling errors, differences in ink and writing, missing or inaccurate information regarding dosing and quantity
- 4) Request photo identification to verify patient's identity
- 5) Confirm prescription with physician

Once a forgery is confirmed:

- 1) Retain prescription. If patient demands prescription, make copy of prescription and mark original to alert next pharmacy. Do not compromise safety of pharmacy staff or patients.
- 2) Contact police. Provide a copy of original prescription to police if requested and allowed.
- 3) Report forgery to MPhA
- 4) Fill out [Health Canada Forgery report](#) and send copies to Health Canada and MPhA
- 5) If PHIN fraud contact Manitoba Health – Jeff Rentz, Auditor, Risk Analyst (204-788-6774)