



**Royal
Pharmaceutical
Society
of Great Britain**

Law and Ethics Bulletin

Preventing NHS Fraud

Pharmacists are reminded of the need to ensure that any payment claims for NHS services are truthful and accurate. Making a false claim for payment may constitute a criminal offence or professional misconduct or both.

Prescription Endorsements

Pharmacists are advised to ensure that all prescription endorsements are accurate so that the pack size and quantities endorsed correctly reflect the supply made. Particular caution should be exercised when using an automatic endorsing system that may default to the smallest pack size available. The Society is aware of a number of incidences where endorsements for small packs of a product were inaccurately and/or dishonestly made and large pack sizes dispensed.

Medicines Use Review (MUR)

Pharmacists must ensure that they do not claim payment for more than the maximum number of MURs that they are entitled to undertake and that claims are not being made for consultations that would not be classed as an MUR. If pharmacists are in any doubt as to what claims they are entitled to make they should contact their local Primary Care Organisation.

Other Professional Services

Pharmacists should ensure that when providing locally agreed NHS services, e.g. smoking cessation, payment claims accurately reflect the type and level of service provided.

Patient Declaration

Pharmacists are reminded to check that the declaration on the back of the prescription form has been filled in correctly. Where a patient (or his or her representative) declares an exemption from prescription charges, the pharmacist is required to check for evidence of this, except where a patient is exempt due to age and the date of birth is computer-generated on the prescription.

The Society does not encourage pharmacists to sign the declaration on behalf of a patient unless fully satisfied as to the patient's identity and exemption status. A false declaration made by the pharmacist, whether knowingly or as a result of failure to check a patient's exemption, may constitute a criminal offence or professional misconduct or both. In addition incorrect declarations made by a pharmacist may result in the patient being subject to a criminal investigation.

Counterfeit/Stolen Prescriptions

Finally, pharmacists are reminded of the pharmaceutical reward scheme, whereby a pharmacist who identifies and reports a fraudulent or stolen NHS prescription will receive a monetary reward. In detecting such a prescription, pharmacists are helping to reduce and deter patient prescription fraud. Any pharmacist who believes he or she is eligible for this reward in England should contact the NHS Counter Fraud Service on freephone 0800 068 6161. For Wales, please contact Health Solutions Wales on 029 2050 0500.

Both the Royal Pharmaceutical Society and the NHS Counter Fraud Service are committed to developing counter fraud techniques and sharing information to crack down on those defrauding the NHS. To highlight this commitment, the Society and the NHS Counter Fraud Service have agreed a Memorandum of Understanding formalising the working relationship between the two organisations.