Pharmacist's Letter
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Protect Your Pharmacy From the Next Scam

Pharmacy scams are back in the news again.

Recently, DEA warned of fake agents trying to steal sensitive info from pharmacies and prescribers.

And thousands of fake Rxs have been filled throughout the US.

To make matters worse, pharmacies can be held liable for dispensing these Rxs...and face payer clawbacks, fines, and disciplinary action.

Work as a team to avoid becoming the next victim.

When a caller claims they're an inspector, wholesaler, or payer, gather key details (name, badge number, etc) to verify their identity.

Be leery of people offering up your pharmacy's NPI or license number. Scammers can find these online to try to appear legitimate.

Look for clues that an Rx may be fraudulent, especially with controls. For instance, Rxs with different-colored ink...larger-than-normal quantities...or directions written in full with no abbreviations.

Don't assume all electronic Rxs are legit. There are reports of fake e-Rxs...due to hacks on prescribing software and credentials.

Keep fake phoned-in Rxs on your radar too. Scammers pretending to be prescribers will typically call after hours to avoid live Rx verification...and give their personal phone number for any questions.

Trust your gut when things seem off. Take your time if you suspect something is wrong...and figure out your next steps.

For example, call the prescriber's office to verify Rxs using a phone number from a trusted source...and NOT from the number on the Rx.

Don't rely on caller ID. Scammers can use "spoofing" software to make a different name and number appear.

With emails, look for generic greetings, misspellings, or suspicious attachments. These are clues it may be a scam.

Think like HIPAA when responding to any call or email...and only give out the minimum necessary and appropriate info.

Help report suspected scams to your employer and authorities (board of pharmacy, local DEA office, etc). Include all important details...such as the date of the incident and name the scammer used.

Dig into our checklist, *Help Prevent and Manage Pharmacy Scams*, for more tips to avoid being "Rx-ploited."

Key References:

-DEA. Pharmacist's Guide to Prescription Fraud. 2024. https://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/GDP/(DEA-DC-002R1)(EO-DEA009R1)_RPH_Guide_to_RX_Fraud_Trifold_(Final).pdf (Accessed November 28, 2024).
-DEA. Pharmacist's Manual: An Informational Outline of the Controlled Substances Act. 2022. https://deadiversion.usdoj.gov/GDP/(DEA-DC-046R1)(EO-DEA154R1)_Pharmacist's_Manual_DEA.pdf (Accessed November 30, 2024).
-FDA. Internet Pharmacy Warning Letters. November 22, 2024. https://www.fda.gov/drugs/drug-supply-chain-integrity/internet-pharmacy-warning-letters (Accessed January 19, 2025).

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