



High Desert Health System POLICY AND PROCEDURE

POLICY NUMBER: 399
VERSION: 1

SUBJECT: MEDICATION REFILLS PROTOCOL

PURPOSE: To describe guidelines for the management of medication refill requests for prescriptions filled at both the High Desert Health System (HDHS) pharmacy and at outside community pharmacies.

To enhance patient compliance with treatment regimens by providing mechanisms for patients to obtain refills of prescribed medications, where appropriate, when the medications are needed prior to the patient's next scheduled visit.

POLICY: HDHS clinics, the HDHS Pharmacy, and the HDHS Health Information Management (HIM) Department will follow the procedures outlined below for the processing of refill requests without valid refills.

For each primary care clinic, the Chief of Service/Lead Physician responsible for the service will designate a provider each day to review refill requests for prescriptions written by providers who are not present in the clinic that day.

The HDHS Urgent Care Clinic and the South Valley Health Center (SVHC) Urgent Care Clinic are not primary care or continuity clinics. Patients seen in these clinics who require follow-up and/or ongoing management are referred to a primary care clinic. Therefore, prescriptions written by providers in these clinics should not include refills. Patients who present at these clinics with urgent medication refill needs will be evaluated by an urgent care provider and, where appropriate, a short-term prescription may be provided.

The HDHS Pharmacy will refill medications only when a valid refill is on file in the Pharmacy. When a valid refill is not on-file, the patient must obtain a new prescription. The HDHS Pharmacy does not accept prescriptions by telephone. Prescriptions can be faxed to the HDHS Pharmacy with the exception of controlled substances.

Prescriptions for Controlled Substance Schedule II medications cannot be refilled. Prescription refill requests for narcotic analgesics should not be refilled without a clinic visit for reassessment.

PROCEDURE:

1. HDHS Pharmacy Telephone Refill Line

The HDHS Pharmacy maintains a telephone refill line. Patients with valid refills on an existing prescription may call this number and request that the refill be filled by the Pharmacy.

- A. Pharmacy staff will document the refill requests from the Telephone Refill Line on the Telephone Refill Line Request form (Attachment A).
- B. If the refill is valid, the Pharmacy will refill the prescription within 48 hours.
- C. If a valid refill is not on file the Pharmacy, or if there are other problems with the refill request, the Pharmacy will forward the Telephone Refill Line Request form to the HDHS HIM department, inform the patient that the request has been forwarded to the patient's provider, and advise the patient that he/she will be contacted by the provide or clinic staff regarding the refill request.
- D. The HDHS HIM Department will pull the patient's medical record, attach the Telephone Refill Line Request form to it, and deliver it to the prescribing provider at his/her next scheduled clinic session.
- E. The prescribing provider will review the request and the patient record and determine if he/she will write a new prescription, write a short-term "bridge" prescription to provide the patient with medication until his/her next scheduled visit, or schedule a clinic visit to assess the patient. If the provider indicates that a clinic visit should be scheduled, the time period for the visit should be indicated.
- F. If the provider initiates a new prescription, Clinic Nursing staff will fax the prescription to the HDHS Outpatient Pharmacy and contact the patient and inform them that the prescription has been approved and forwarded to the pharmacy. At the end of the clinic session, the original prescriptions will be sent to the HDHS Outpatient Pharmacy.
- G. If the provider indicates that a clinic visit should be scheduled, Clinic Nursing staff will schedule the appointment and inform the patient.

2. Procedure for Patients Contacting Primary Care Clinics by Telephone to Request Medication Refills

- A. The Clinic Registered Nurse will complete the Medication Refill Request form (Attachment B), and document on the form whether the patient is having any new or worsening medical problems. The Clinic Registered Nurse will request the patient's chart and provide the chart and the Medication Refill Request form to the provider.

- B. The prescribing provider will review the request and the patient record and determine if he/she will write a new prescription, write a short-term “bridge” prescription to provide the patient with medication until his/her next scheduled visit, or schedule a same day or future clinic visit to assess the patient. If the provider indicates that a future clinic visit should be scheduled, the time period for the visit should be indicated. **If the prescribing provider is present in the clinic, he/she should review the refill request.**
- C. If the patient is seen for a medication refill, the provider will assess the need to refill the medication and will document in the patient’s medical record pertinent clinical information and the indication for prescribing the medication.
- D. If the prescribing provider is not present in the clinic, the request will be reviewed by an alternate provider designated by the Chief of Service/Lead Physician responsible for the service. The reviewing provider will review the request and follow the procedures outlined above under sections 2.B. and 2.C.

3. Procedure for Patients Presenting Without Scheduled Appointments to Primary Care Clinics Requesting Medication Refills

- A. The Clinic Registered Nurse will complete the Medication Refill Request Form (Attachment B), and document on the form whether the patient is having any new or worsening medical problems. The Clinic Registered Nurse will request the patient’s chart and provide the chart and the Medication Refill Request form to the provider.
- B. The prescribing provider will review the request and the patient record and determine if he/she will write a new prescription, write a short-term “bridge” prescription to provide the patient with medication until his/her next scheduled visit, or schedule a same day or future clinic visit to assess the patient. If the provider indicates that a future clinic visit should be scheduled, the time period for the visit should be indicated. **If the prescribing provider is present in the clinic, he/she should review the refill request. The patient should not be referred to the Urgent Care Clinic without discussion and agreement between the primary care provider and the urgent care provider.**
- C. If the patient is seen for a medication refill, the provider will assess the need to refill the medication and will document in the patient’s medical record pertinent clinical information and the indication for prescribing the medication.
- D. If the prescribing provider is not present in the clinic, when a patient presents with a request for a medication refill, the request will be reviewed by an alternate provider designated by the Chief of Service/Lead Physician responsible for the service. The reviewing provider will review the request and follow the procedures outlined above under sections 2.B and 2.C.

4. Procedure for Patients Presenting to Urgent Care Clinics for Medication Refills

- A. The Triage Nurse will determine how much medication that the patient has left, attempt to determine if the patient already has a valid refill for the medication (by reviewing the patient's medical record or by contacting the dispensing pharmacy), determine if the patient has a future visit scheduled with the prescribing provider, and assess the patient to determine if his/her condition is worsening. This information will be utilized by the Triage Nurse to determine if the patient needs to be seen in the Urgent Care Clinic.
- B. If the Triage Nurse determines that the patient already has a valid refill, the patient will be referred to the dispensing pharmacy.
- C. If the Triage Nurse determines that the patient has enough medication to last until his/her next scheduled visit with the prescribing provider, and the patient's condition does not require that he/she be seen that day, the Triage Nurse will remind the patient of his/her appointment and advise the patient to discuss the refill with the prescribing provider. The Triage Nurse may also assist the patient in obtaining an appointment with the primary care provider.
- D. If the Triage Nurse determines that the patient does not have sufficient medication to last until his/her next scheduled visit with the prescribing provider, the Triage Nurse will arrange for the patient to be seen in the Urgent Care Clinic. ,
- E. The Urgent Care provider will assess the need to refill the medication and will document in the patient's medical record pertinent clinical information and the indication for prescribing the medication, writing a short-term "bridge" prescription to provide the patient with medication until his/her next scheduled visit, or declining to prescribe the medication and referring the patient to be seen by the prescribing provider.

5. Procedure for Medication Refills Requested by Telephone or Fax from Outside Community Pharmacies

- A. All outside community pharmacies are directed to fax medication refill requests to the HIM department at each clinic, as indicated on the original prescription. Pharmacies that contact the clinic by telephone with medication refill requests will be directed to fax refill requests to the appropriate HIM fax number.
- B. HIM staff will verify whether the patient has an active chart. If the patient has an active chart, HIM staff will pull the patient's medical record and forward the faxed refill request with the medical record to the appropriate clinic. If the patient does not have an active chart, HIM staff will send the refill request to the appropriate clinic with a notation that the patient does not have an active chart at that clinic location.
- C. If the faxed refill request is not appropriate, such as a request for a refill from an urgent care provider, or if the patient does not have an active chart at the clinic

location, Nursing staff in the clinic will be responsible for notifying the pharmacy and/or the patient. The patient will be advised that he/she will need to be seen by a provider to assess the need for the medication refill. If the patient cannot be located in the computer system, the refill request will be forwarded to the HIM Supervisor for further investigation and notification of the requesting pharmacy.

- D. Clinic nursing staff will review the patient's medical record, document the patient's diagnosis, last scheduled clinic visit, and future scheduled appointments on the Medication Refill Request form. Clinic nursing staff will provide the refill request, the medical record and the Medication Refill Request form to the provider.
 - E. The prescribing provider will review the request and the patient record, following the procedures outlined in sections 2.B. and 2.C. above.
 - F. If the prescribing provider is not present in the clinic, the request will be reviewed by an alternate provider designated by the Chief of Service/Lead Physician responsible for the service. The reviewing provider will determine if the request needs urgent attention, or if it can wait until the prescribing provider returns to the clinic. If the request required urgent attention, the reviewing provider will follow the procedures outlined above in section 2.B. and 2.C. above.
6. After receiving direction from the prescribing or reviewing provider, implement the necessary action, such as faxing the refill authorization to the pharmacy, contacting the patient with directions, etc.

Approved By: Beryl Brooks (ADMR,COMP AMB HEALTH CARE CENTER), Ruth Oren (CHIEF PHYSICIAN I ANESTHESIOLOGY), Susan Knapp (CHIEF NURSING OFFICER I)	
Date: 06/10/2014	Original Date: 07/01/2003
Reviewed: 06/10/2014	Next Review Date: 06/10/2015
Supersedes:	