

*VALLEYCARE*  
**OLIVE VIEW-UCLA MEDICAL CENTER/HEALTH CENTERS  
POLICY & PROCEDURE**

**NUMBER: 1672  
VERSION: 1**

**SUBJECT/TITLE: PHARMACY OPERATIONS DURING THE TEMPORARY ABSENCE OF A PHARMACIST**

**POLICY:** The pharmacist may leave the pharmacy temporarily for breaks and meal periods as authorized under Title 16. Professional and Vocational Regulations, Division 17 California State Board of Pharmacy, Article 2 Pharmacies, Section 1714.1.

**PURPOSE:** To ensure that pharmacists are able to have duty free breaks and meals periods to which they are entitled under Section 512 of the Labor Code and the orders of the Industrial Welfare Commission, without unreasonably impairing the ability of a pharmacy to remain open.

**DEPARTMENTS:** All

**DEFINITIONS:** **ANCILLARY STAFF:** Intern pharmacist, pharmacy technician, non-licensed personnel, pharmacy technician trainee

**PROCEDURE:**

**A. For any pharmacy that is staffed for the entire workday by a single pharmacist, the pharmacist may leave the pharmacy temporarily for breaks and meal periods without closing the pharmacy and removing ancillary staff from the pharmacy if:**

1. The pharmacist reasonably believes that the security of the dangerous drugs and devices will be maintained in his or her absence. No one will be permitted entrance inside the pharmacy during this period or allowed to leave the pharmacy during this period.
2. During the pharmacist's temporary absence, not to exceed 30 minutes, no prescription medication may be provided to a patient or to a patient's agent unless the prescription medication is a refill medication that the pharmacist has checked, released for furnishing to the patient and was determined not to require the consultation of a pharmacist.
3. During such times that the pharmacist is temporarily absent from the pharmacy, the ancillary staff may continue to perform only the non-discretionary duties authorized to them, however, any duty performed by any member of the ancillary staff shall be reviewed by a pharmacist upon his or her return to the pharmacy:

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- a. Receive new prescriptions being dropped off by patients. If input or typing of such prescriptions gives a pharmacy warning/alert message, ancillary staff are to defer further processing until reviewed by a pharmacist
  - b. Answer non-discretionary questions.
  - c. Process VOICEMAIL prescription refill requests.
  - d. Check in orders.
  - e. Prepare reports, file prescription records.
  - f. Clean, straighten and arrange pharmacy counters and shelves.
  - g. Check for outdated medications
  - h. Inventory counting.
  - i. Perform **NO** act requiring the exercise of professional judgment by a pharmacist.
4. During the temporary absence of a pharmacist, an intern pharmacist may not perform any discretionary duties nor otherwise act as a pharmacist.
  5. The temporary absence of a pharmacist shall be limited to the minimum period authorized for pharmacists by section 512 of Labor Code or orders of the Industrial Welfare Commission (currently 15 minutes), and any meal shall be limited to 30 minutes. The pharmacist who is on break shall not be required to remain in the pharmacy area during the break period, but must remain on County premises.

**B. DEFINITIONS OF ANCILLARY STAFF:**

1. Intern pharmacist, pharmacy technician, non-licensed personnel as defined in Section 1793.3 of Title 16 of the California Code of Regulations and a pharmacy technician trainee as defined in Section 4115.5 (a) of the Business and Professions Code. Part A, steps 1 through 3.
2. Anyone not designated in number one above is not authorized to be in the pharmacy during the absence of a pharmacist.

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References: Title 16. Professional and Vocational Regulations, Division 17 California State Board of Pharmacy, Article 2 Pharmacies, Section 1714.1.	
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