

INTERNET PHARMACIES

PROBLEM:

The availability of prescription drugs online without a prescription has become a national and international issue resulting in congressional hearings and new law enforcement initiatives. For law abiding citizens, particularly the elderly homebound and residents of rural America, the ability to fill their doctor's prescription online could be a great boon. But how do your patients know they're dealing with a legitimate licensed and inspected pharmacy online?

ANSWER:

In response to this public concern, the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy (NABP) developed the Verified Internet Pharmacy Practice Sites™ (VIPPS™) program. VIPPS provides a "Seal of Approval" to those online pharmacies that meet a rigorous 17-point criteria review and pass an onsite inspection by a team of specially trained pharmacy inspectors. The VIPPS Seal on a pharmacy's Web site allows the public to easily recognize and verify an online pharmacy as legitimate and prepared to dispense pharmaceuticals through the Internet. A coalition of state and federal regulatory agencies, professional associations, and consumer advocacy groups provided their expertise in developing the criteria, which VIPPS certified pharmacies adhere to.

VIPPS certified pharmacies are licensed by each state to which they dispense and inspected by NABP for compliance with the VIPPS criteria. Criteria include patient rights to privacy, authentication and security of prescription orders, adherence to a quality assurance policy, and provision of meaningful consultation between patient and pharmacist.

VIPPS certified pharmacies display the VIPPS hyperlink seal on their home page. By clicking on the seal, your patient is linked to the NABP VIPPS site where verified information is displayed about the pharmacy's ownership, licensure, disciplinary sanctions, etc. Your patients may also search for a VIPPS certified pharmacy that matches their needs by visiting the NABP site at www.nabp.net.

WHAT TO DO:

With hundreds of online pharmacy Web sites to choose from, VIPPS provides educated consumers a means to protect themselves from fraudulent pharmacies. Tell your patients

"Look for the Seal – Click to Verify".

VIPPS is endorsed by the American Medical Association and the Food and Drug Administration.

