

Washington State Department of Health Pharmacy Quality Assurance Commission

Notice of Adoption – Policy Statement

Title: Transfer for Initial Dispensing of an Electronic Prescription for a Controlled Substance | Policy Statement P013

Issuing Entity: Pharmacy Quality Assurance Commission

Subject Matter: This policy clarifies the Pharmacy Quality Assurance Commission’s approach to enforcing timely transfers for initial dispensing of an electronic prescription for a controlled substance, if the failure to comply results from the licensee’s use of National Council for Prescription Drug programs (NCPDP) SCRIPT standard version 2023011, as it relates to WAC 246-945-346.

Effective Date: December 26, 2024

Contact Person: Marlee B. O’Neill, Executive Director

Pharmacy Quality Assurance Commission,
Washington State Department of Health
360-890-0720

WSPQAC@doh.wa.gov

OFFICE OF THE CODE REVISER
STATE OF WASHINGTON
FILED

DATE: November 26, 2024

TIME: 2:55 PM

WSR 24-24-054

Washington State Department of Health

Pharmacy Quality Assurance Commission

To request this document in another format, call 1-800-525-0127. Deaf or hard of hearing customers, please call 711 (Washington Relay) or email doh.information@doh.wa.gov.

Policy Statement

Title:	Transfer for Initial Dispensing of an Electronic Prescription for a Controlled Substance
Policy Statement Number:	P013
References:	WAC 246-945-346
Contact:	Marlee B. O'Neill, Executive Director, Pharmacy Quality Assurance Commission
Phone:	360-236-4700
Email:	WSPQAC@doh.wa.gov
Effective Date:	December 26, 2024
Supersedes:	N/A
Approved By:	Hawkins DeFrance, Pharmacy Quality Assurance Commission

The Pharmacy Quality Assurance Commission (commission) will not take enforcement action against, or find licensees deficient, for failure to comply with the requirement in WAC 246-945-346 to timely transfer, for initial dispensing, an electronic prescription for a controlled substance, if the failure to comply results from the licensee's use of National Council for Prescription Drug Programs (NCPDP) SCRIPT standard version 2017071. However, the licensee must provide a timeline to the commission, upon request, that demonstrates when the licensee will be using NCPDP SCRIPT standard version 2023011.

WAC 246-945-346 requires that if a patient or their authorized representative requests the transfer of an electronic prescription for a controlled substance, a pharmacy must transfer the prescription within three business days of receiving the request or within a timeframe that does not adversely impact the medication therapy, whichever comes first. The transfer must also occur within the limits of state and federal law.

The commission has been made aware that many pharmacies are unable to electronically transfer controlled substance prescriptions. This is because, until recently, regulations adopted by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) established NCPDP SCRIPT standard version 2017071 as the Medicare Part D prescription drug benefit e-prescribing standard. SCRIPT standard version 2017071 is not capable of transferring electronic

prescriptions for a controlled substances for initial dispensing. As a result, CMS engaged in rulemaking to adopt a new Medicare Part D prescription drug benefit e-prescribing standard.

On June 16, 2024, CMS [published](#) a final rule that, among other things, adopts NCPDP Script standard version 2023011 as the Medicare Part D prescription drug benefit e-prescribing standard. NCPDP SCRIPT standard version 2023011 can facilitate electronic transfers of controlled substance prescription information. In the final rule, CMS will allow the use of both NCPDP SCRIPT standard version 2017071 and NCPDP SCRIPT standard version 2023011 until January 1, 2028. Consequently, as of January 1, 2028, NCPDP SCRIPT standard version 2023011 will be the only Medicare Part D prescription drug benefit e-prescribing standard.

Between June 16, 2024 and January 1, 2028, the commission anticipates some licensees will continue to use NCPDP SCRIPT standard version 2017071, and will therefore be unable to transfer electronic prescriptions for a controlled substance for initial dispensing. Because of this, the commission will not take enforcement action against, or find licensees deficient for, failure to comply with the requirement in WAC 246-945-346 to timely transfer, for initial dispensing, an electronic prescription for a controlled substance upon request. However, the licensee must provide a timeline to the commission, upon request, that demonstrates when the licensee will be using NCPDP SCRIPT standard version 2023011.

To avoid disruption to a patient's access to prescribed medications, patients and health care providers are encouraged to verify and update the patient's preferred pharmacy.