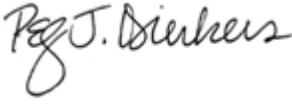


	MEDICAL ASSISTANCE BULLETIN COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA * DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE	
	SUBJECT Prescription Refills Maintenance Medications	BY  Peg J. Dierkers, Ph.D. Deputy Secretary for Medical Assistance Programs
NUMBER:	19-99-06	
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PURPOSE:

The purpose of this bulletin is to advise pharmacies about the Department's position on early refills of maintenance medications.

SCOPE:

This bulletin applies to all pharmacies enrolled in the Medical Assistance (M A) Program.

BACKGROUND:

With the year 2000 growing near, many people may have concerns about their prescriptions, especially maintenance medications. Some may be alarmed that prescription medications may be in short supply and may begin hoarding or stockpiling medication by getting extra refills on their maintenance medications before its normal time.

DISCUSSION:

The Department has been monitoring the situation and is confident that the M A Program, the pharmaceutical industry and the pharmacy community are prepared for the Y2K phenomenon. The Department is also confident that the pharmaceutical supply system should continue to work normally as the new year approaches.

The Department does not encourage hoarding or stockpiling prescription medication because it may result in an unnecessary shortage of medical supplies. Hoarding or stockpiling by patients could create a greater threat to the supply of medications than any computer glitch. Instead, the Department encourages pharmacies to instruct their patients to have their prescription for maintenance medications refilled at normal intervals. It is generally advisable to get a normal refill of a maintenance medication when there is a 5 to 7 day supply of medication remaining. This is a good practice as it gives the pharmacy adequate time to restock the medication. Instructing your patients of this practice will assure them a continuous supply of their medication and avoid a missed dose of their maintenance medication.

COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS BULLETIN SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO:

Pharmacy Services Section
 P.O. Box 8043
 Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17105

1-800-932-0938

Visit the Office of Medical Assistance Programs website at www.dpw.state.pa.us/omap.