



ABSOLUTE SCOOP

To ensure proper chain of custody & compliance with controlled medications:

- Two (2) people should review and check-in controlled medications and add them to carts/starter-boxes.



Written by Beth Husted, Director of Pharmacy

Delivery and Returns Best Practices & Maintaining Chain of Custody

You are in charge of training at your facility. Tonight is the first night that your new overnight nurse will be working their scheduled shift alone. Although training has gone well, and you are confident they will do great, you can't help but think to yourself "...if only I had a tool to give my new employee that would help remind them how to handle the pharmacy order as it arrives and make sure our returns are picked up when I am not here to help them!". It suddenly dawns on you that your pharmacy, Absolute, is always willing to help and has created a best practices document for just such a scenario.

Ensuring that the chain of custody is maintained during delivery and return of pharmacy-provided medications is key. Below are some of the best practices to help your facility efficiently receive your medication delivery, communicate any discrepancies, and prepare a return.

Receiving Your Pharmacy Delivery

- The individual receiving the pharmacy delivery should:
 - Verify the number of packages received versus the number of packages listed on the delivery driver's electronic device.
 - Sign the handheld device to confirm receipt of packages.
 - This signature does not serve as confirmation that contents are correct but that the number of packages match and have been dropped off.
- Do NOT refuse a delivery containing a controlled medication if you no longer need an item.
 - Contact pharmacy to arrange for a return to ensure chain of custody is maintained.
 - Controlled medications should be secured until they are able to be returned appropriately.

Reviewing Your Pharmacy Delivery

- Each item received from pharmacy should be listed on the packing slip.
- If a discrepancy is noted on any packing slip, CALL Absolute Pharmacy (1-800-858-7393) within 24 hours.
- **Non-Controlled Medications:**
 - Check that each item on the packing slip is accounted for and that the quantity received is accurate.
- **Controlled Medications:**
 - Two (2) people should review and check in controlled medications and add them to carts/starter-boxes accordingly (this ensures proper chain of custody and compliance with shift-to-shift counts).

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- If two (2) people are not available when the pharmacy delivery arrives, the controlled medication packages should be secured in the med room/locked in the medication cart with other controlled medications until another licensed individual is on-site.
- Check that each item on the packing slip is accounted for and that the quantity received is accurate.
- BOTH individuals should sign and date the packing slip, **then fax it back to pharmacy within 24 hrs.**

Pharmacy Returns

- Designate a spot at your facility for returns and communicate this to all staff as well as your delivery driver.
- Ideally, this spot should be close to the nursing station and/or your normal delivery drop-off location.
- Medications may be returned to the pharmacy; however not all items are eligible for credit.
- DO NOT send controlled medications back to the pharmacy unless a Return Authorization is received.
 - Once a return authorization is processed, the pharmacy will send a secured bag/tote for the controlled return to be placed in.
 - This process ensures chain of custody for controlled medications.
- Do not send trash, resident's personal belongings, unused vaccines, or any refrigerated med back as a return.

By following these best practices, your facility can maintain chain of custody for medications during both the delivery and returns processes.

About the Author



Outside of work, Beth enjoys spending time with her 3 kids and husband. You can often find her on the soccer field & basketball court, or enjoying some white wine (lol).

Beth Husted, PharmD, RPh, is the Director of Pharmacy at Absolute. She joined us in early 2019 and quickly became a respected leader and trusted advisor. She initiated our "Follow Me Home" discharge program and took on leadership of the Consultant Pharmacists and their many clinical initiatives and services. During the pandemic, Beth led our COVID-19 vaccination efforts including acquisition of the vaccine to become a Phase 1A provider - one of nine LTC pharmacies nationally! Due to her success with the COVID-19 vaccine initiative, she quickly earned an honorary Queen of COVID Award. Beth is a graduate of Ohio Northern University and a full-time parent along with her husband Pete and 3 children.

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