



# ARIZONA STATE BOARD OF PHARMACY

*newsletter to promote pharmacy and drug law compliance*

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- Les Braswell, Member (Public)

## **Update Your Profile**

In an effort to communicate more effectively with its licensees and permittees, the Arizona State Board of Pharmacy has noticed that contact information in its system is not always current and up to date. You are required to update your personal contact information and pharmacy employer within 10 days after a change, pursuant to Arizona Revised Statutes §32-1926. Please use your online profile to [update your contact information](#).

## **Be on Alert – Scam**

There have been reports of individuals impersonating Board staff members requesting personal information from license and permit holders. Please know that the Board already has your information, which you are able to update using the Board website at any time. The Board

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does not collect payment over the phone. If you experience a similar situation in which you are contacted for personal or financial information, please contact the Board office at 602/771-2727.

## **Welcome New Board Member**



Les Braswell is a seasoned public relations and communications specialist who has worked on Capitol Hill and in numerous states across the country. A veteran of high-profile political campaigns, Les now owns and operates Mission Media, LLC, where he supports public engagement campaigns and advocacy organizations. Les earned a bachelor of arts degree in political science from the University of South Carolina Honors College, holds a certification from CEPE-UNAM in Mexico City, and has earned a diploma from Instituto Cervantes (DELE) at the C1 level in Spanish. His interest areas include government accountability, protecting public lands, and health care advocacy.

## **Compliance Corner**

### **Fake Electronic Prescriptions**

At the **December 2023 Board meeting**, Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) presented information about fraudulent electronic prescriptions. This has been a growing and worrisome trend in the industry. This installment of the Compliance Corner includes information about the scope of this problem, some of the ways it transpires, pharmacists' corresponding responsibility to address it, and what to do if fraudulent prescriptions are encountered. These prescriptions often present in the same fashion as legitimate electronically prescribed prescriptions but have been transmitted by criminals; therefore, they can be difficult to detect.

The scope of electronic prescription fraud is growing every day. In 2023, DEA reported that one nephrologist's account was used to write 844 controlled substance (CS) prescriptions in 72 hours, including prescriptions for oxycodone, promethazine with codeine, and alprazolam. The State of Arizona received 497 of them, and 61 were filled by Arizona pharmacies.

This fraud is accomplished by criminals gaining access to the electronic prescriptions for controlled substances (EPCS) system and sending fraudulent prescriptions to pharmacies via the normal electronic transmission process. The major way this happens is that a fraudster steals the identity of a prescriber and logs in to the EPCS system. These criminals may use existing prescriber EPCS credentials and log in; they may also open new EPCS accounts and use the stolen identity information to verify the accounts. Once access is gained, the fraudster proceeds to send electronic prescriptions to pharmacies. Once filled, the fraudster or an accomplice will pick up the drugs.

The pharmacists' **corresponding responsibility** is to apply diligence to each prescription, regardless of the means in which it was transmitted. This includes exercising professional

judgment and following professional standards when determining the legitimacy of any CS prescription. It is important to exercise due diligence and make this determination **before** the medication is dispensed. One standard of practice is to use the Arizona Controlled Substances Prescription Monitoring Program (CSPMP). The CSPMP is a great resource that is invaluable to determining the legitimacy of a prescription via a patient's history. For more information about the CSPMP, visit <https://pharmacympm.az.gov>. Another professional standard includes being familiar with and identifying discrepancies when scrutinizing a prescription. Things to focus on may include:

- unknown patient or prescriber;
- out-of-town/-state patient or prescriber;
- prescriber address is not an office space (ie, gas station or residence);
- new-to-therapy patient with high dose;
- suspicious drug, quantity, or strength;
- errors in spelling or grammar;
- cash payment or discount cards;
- unconventional symbols/language on the prescription; or
- providers prescribing out of scope (ie, an ophthalmologist prescribing stimulants).

Although not a requirement in Arizona, asking for a photo ID of the person picking up the drugs has been suggested by DEA as one way to help curb this issue.

If a pharmacist discovers a fraudulent prescription, they should not fill the prescription and instead report it to DEA's tip line at <https://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/tips-online.html>. DEA noted that although it may not respond to every reported fraudulent prescription, they are being documented, and DEA does appreciate the information.

It is important for pharmacists to remain aware of fraudulent EPCS. Consistently demonstrating corresponding responsibility by exercising due diligence and professional judgment can help to curtail this growing trend. For more information about fraudulent prescriptions and pharmacists' corresponding responsibility, read the Board's [July 2023 Newsletter](#).

## ***Disciplinary Actions and Updates – Health Boards***

Disciplinary actions for the Arizona State Board of Pharmacy can be found [here](#).

Disciplinary actions for the Arizona Medical Board can be found [here](#).

Disciplinary actions for the Arizona Osteopathic Board can be found [here](#).

Disciplinary actions for the Arizona State Board of Dental Examiners can be found [here](#).

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