

Colorado State Board of Pharmacy Policy

POLICY NUMBER: 40-4

Title: Appropriateness of Labeling Prescriptions to Partners of Patients with Sexually Transmitted Infections

Date Issued: July 19, 2007

Purpose: To clarify the Colorado Pharmacy Board's position concerning the appropriateness of labeling prescriptions to partners of patients with sexually transmitted infections.

POLICY: The Board acknowledges the concern and dilemma which occurs when a pharmacist encounters a patient with a sexually transmitted infection, and the partner does not come to the physician's office to obtain a prescription order. The ideal situation would be that each partner visits his or her primary healthcare provider for treatment to obtain a prescription order. However, the Board recognizes that what is idealistic may not be realistic. There is compelling need for the partner to receive treatment in the form of prescription medications. Treating partners of patients with sexually transmitted infections is generally considered acceptable and desirable if the partner will not seek treatment from his or her primary healthcare provider. The overriding public policy concern must be to treat the infected partner. It must be made clear to the patient that his or her partner must take the medication as prescribed and should follow-up with his or her own healthcare provider. If the partner has any drug allergy or is on any medication, he or she should consult with a healthcare provider before obtaining the prescription. It is the position of the Colorado Pharmacy Board that the public risk of untreated sexually transmitted infection is greater than the risk of complications from dispensing in this less than ideal setting.

Therefore, the Board approves of the labeling of prescriptions for partners of patients with sexually transmitted infections pursuant to prescription orders issued by a licensed practitioner in the following manner:

1. Label the treated patient's prescription by the patient's own name.
2. Label the untreated partner's prescription by the treated patient's name immediately followed by the word "Partner". For example, for the treated patient – "Joe Smith", then for the untreated patient – "Joe Smith's Partner."
3. Assign a separate and unique identifying number to each prescription and clearly identify this number on each corresponding prescription label.