

From: Rando89
Sent: Saturday, March 27, 2004 2:16 PM
To: CONTACTLENSRULE
Subject: Comments for the Contact Lens Rule

In the past, we have encountered numerous problems regarding contact lens prescriptions. Suppliers routinely sent contact lenses to patients without a valid prescription. Expired prescriptions were filled at will. Patients could obtain lenses for years without any sort of follow-up care. Serious eye problems arose. Suppliers were not held accountable for their actions.

The Fairness to Contact Lens Consumers Act is a step in the right direction but some issues still need to be clarified. The following are some of the problems we have experienced at our practice:

1. Contact lens suppliers are faxing us after business hours. There is no date or time on the faxed verification forms so we don't know when they were actually sent.
2. Satellite office verification problems. We have 3 locations. As is the case with many doctor's offices, each office is not open every day, therefore expired and invalid prescriptions are being filled by suppliers because we cannot respond within 8 hours. It is physically impossible to respond if we are not in the office. 24 hours would be more realistic.
3. Automated phone calls from the suppliers are malfunctioning. It is difficult to talk to a human if there are specific issues that need to be discussed, such as filling only a limited quantity of lenses if the prescription is about to expire and the patient is due for follow-up care.
4. A quantity is not always specified on the verification forms.
5. Patients can potentially shop numerous suppliers for numerous purchases (exceeding a one year supply) with the same contact lens prescription copy. There should be a way to prevent abuse of the system.

Ultimately, the issue should be the health and well being of the patient. While choice and price are legitimate issues, we should not lose sight of the most important aspect of this law. That is, to protect the patient and hold contact suppliers accountable for unlawful behavior.

Contact lenses are different from eyeglasses. They require a careful history, evaluation of the cornea and surrounding eye health, curvature measurements, fitting of the lenses, instruction, and perhaps most importantly, ongoing follow-up care. Even experienced contact lens wearers can develop serious problems without appropriate medical supervision.

A contact lens prescription should mirror a prescription for medication. It should include:

- The brand and contact lens parameters
- The quantity of lenses
- Sig (instructions to the patient such as the replacement schedule- for example "2 wk replacement")
- The # of refills
- Expiration date

Anything less than the above is really not a valid prescription. Suppliers need to be held to these standards.

Sincerely,

Randy Cakanac, O.D.
Your Family Eye Doctors, Inc.

PA