

Look-Alike/Sound-Alike Drugs Often Work Differently

What do hydroxyzine and hydralazine have in common? Because their names sound the same, there is a chance the antihistamine could be switched for the antihypertensive agent, leading to a serious adverse drug event.

During the past seven years, the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) has worked to reduce the errors associated with look-alike/sound-alike drugs.

“The issue in terms of look-alike/sound-alike drugs is that this is a very common source of medication errors,” said Dr. Geoffrey Rake, M.D., director of the Department of Defense Patient Safety Center at the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology in Silver Spring, Md.

While pharmaceutical firms and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration work to reduce the likelihood of the mix-ups associated with look-alike or sound-alike drugs, this type of error still occurs—sometimes with tragic results. According to a study by the Institute of Medicine, *Preventing Medication Errors*, there are at least 1.5 million preventable adverse drug events in the United States each year.

For 2006-2007, JCAHO updated the drugs that hospitals and other health care organizations must pick from for their organization’s look-alike/sound-alike list.

New this year for critical access hospitals, hospitals and office-based surgery are:

- Hydroxyzine and hydralazine
- Metformin and metronidazole
- OxyContin® and oxycodone

For ambulatory care, assisted living, behavioral health care, disease specific care, home care and long-term care newly added drugs include:

- Lorazepam and alprazolam
- Metformin and metronidazole
- Topamax® and Toprol XL®

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New Referral/Authorization Form Available

TriWest Healthcare Alliance has updated the current *TRICARE Patient Referral/Authorization* form and created an easy-to-follow, sample *TRICARE Patient Referral/Authorization* form.

The form has been revised to include the National Provider Identifier (NPI) for the requesting and servicing providers and the facility, if applicable. The NPI information is preferred; however, it is not required.

In addition, the order of the data fields on the form has been changed to streamline data entry when processing referral and authorization requests. The sample form shows the specific information that is needed and where to place it on the new referral/authorization form.

Both the new form and the sample form are available at www.triwest.com in the “Find a Form” section. ■



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To reduce the possibility of errors, JCAHO's recommendations to providers prescribing medication include:

- Clearly specify dosage form, drug strength and complete directions on prescriptions.
- Reduce the potential for confusion by writing prescriptions using both the brand and generic name.
- Include the purpose of the medication on the prescription (often look- or sound-alike drugs are used for different purposes).
- Alert patients to potential mix-ups, especially with problematic drug names, and insist on pharmacy counseling when picking up outpatient prescriptions.
- Encourage inpatients to question nurses about medications that are unfamiliar or look or sound different than expected.
- Give verbal or telephone orders only when necessary. Orders for chemotherapeutics should never be given over the telephone. Include the intended purpose for clarity and encourage your staff to read back all orders, including the drug's spelling and indication.

For more information on look-alike/sound-alike medications and complete lists of the medications at risk, go to the JCAHO Web site at www.jointcommission.org/PatientSafety/NationalPatientSafetyGoals, look under "2007 Resources" and select "Look-alike/Sound-alike drug list Updated for 2006-07." ■

Your Role in the Consumer Bill of Rights and Responsibilities

As a health care provider, and more importantly as a TRICARE provider, it's essential you understand and comply with the federal government's Consumer Bill of Rights and Responsibilities.

The purpose of the bill is to:

- Build consumer confidence in the health care system by facilitating ways consumers can actively participate
- Support the importance of a good relationship between health care providers and patients
- Support consumers' role in improving their health by providing them with rights and responsibilities

For your convenience, here is a review of three Bill of Rights chapters that are of utmost importance to TRICARE providers: Information Disclosure; Participation in Treatment Decisions; and Respect and Nondiscrimination.

Information Disclosure

It is the responsibility of TriWest Healthcare Alliance to educate TRICARE beneficiaries about their TRICARE benefits. As part of this, it is important for providers to assist beneficiaries by sharing accurate and understandable information.

Note: If consumers are not fluent in English or if they have a mental or physical disability, providers should make reasonable accommodations so they can make informed health care decisions.

Participation in Treatment Decisions

As a provider, you probably know that patient participation in treatment decisions often leads to better treatment, as well as higher patient satisfaction. However, sometimes

patients have to make vital decisions when they're not in optimal condition to do so. You can help these patients by clearly explaining all the treatment options and the associated risks, benefits and consequences of each option and the alternative of abstaining from treatment. In cases where the patient is unable to make an informed decision, a parent, guardian or designated representative can make the decision for them.

Respect and Nondiscrimination

A good relationship between you and the patient is based on mutual respect. TRICARE beneficiaries have the right to considerate, respectful and nondiscriminatory care from their doctors, health plan representatives and other health care providers.

For more information on the Consumer Bill of Rights and Responsibilities, visit www.hcqualitycommission.gov/cborr. ■



Electronic Remittance Advice Can Reduce Your Paperwork

The Electronic Remittance Advice (ERA) now available through our claims processor, Wisconsin Physicians Service (WPS), can help improve your business office workflow and productivity.

The ERA can, depending on your software, be automatically loaded into your accounts-receivable system. It is a secure and reliable alternative to manually posting claim adjudication information, and gives you and your staff more time to focus on caring for your patients.

How Does It Work?

The ERA contains the same information on claim payment, deductible and co-insurance as a paper explanation of benefits (EOB). The ERA is the electronic equivalent of the EOB and provides details on how your claims were paid and/or why they were denied.

As soon as your WPS TRICARE claims finalize, WPS generates your ERA.

How does ERA benefit me?

Depending on your practice management system and internal workflow, ERA can improve your office workflow and productivity by:

- Eliminating the need to manually enter and process paper EOBs
- Eliminating errors associated with manual posting of paper EOBs
- Eliminating the need to store and file paper EOBs
- Decreasing the time spent reconciling accounts receivable

How can I start receiving ERA?

To enroll, please download and complete the Electronic Remittance Advice document located at www.triwest.com. Click on the "Find a Form" tab, select "Provider Forms" and then select "TriWest Provider EDI Agreement Form."

Fill out the form and return it with the cover letter to:

WPS Electronic Data Services
P.O. Box 8128
Madison, WI 53708-8128

For further information about ERA, visit the "Provider Connection" page at www.TriWest.com and select "Your EDI Connection" on the right side of the page. Then select "835 Electronic Remittance Advice Transaction Guide." ■

Help is Just a Phone Call Away

Providers often contact TriWest Healthcare Alliance for various general inquiries, such as checking eligibility, or inquiring about a specific referral, authorization or claim.

Customer service representatives are able to assist you with most inquiries or concerns. However, if calling 1-888-TRIWEST (1-888-874-9378) or going to the secured area of www.triwest.com doesn't fully resolve your inquiry, there are other resources that can help you.

Network providers may call their local network representative for contracting questions, escalated network provider issues or concerns and other education needs. Non-network providers may call their TRICARE field representative for certification questions, escalated non-network provider issues or concerns and other education needs.

If you are uncertain who your network representative is, please refer to the list of network representatives found in the "Become a TRICARE Provider" section of the "Provider Connection" area of www.triwest.com. You can also find network representative contact information in Section 1, "Welcome to TRICARE and the West Region," of the *TRICARE Provider Handbook*.

Another way to find your network representative is by calling 1-888-TRIWEST (1-888-874-9378). When prompted say "provider," then say "more choices," "provider education," and finally, "yes" when asked if you are a contracted provider. Then say the name of the state where care will be provided to get the contact information for your network representative. ■



TriWest Healthcare Alliance Corp.
P.O. Box 42049
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CONTACTS

TriWest Customer Service
1-888-TRIWEST
www.triwest.com

TRICARE Alaska Office
(Alaskan providers only)
1-907-743-1800

Wisconsin Physicians Service
(Electronic claims set up only)
1-800-782-2680

Express Scripts, Inc. (ESI)
(Pharmacy inquiries)
1-866-DoD-TRRX
1-866-DoD-TMOP
www.express-scripts.com/TRICARE

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Provider News is published by TRICARE Management Activity. Please provide feedback at www.tricare.mil/evaluations/feedback.



Demonstration Available for Online Registration Procedure

To show you just how easy it is to instantly register to use the secured portal at www.triwest.com, TriWest Healthcare Alliance has created an online demonstration of the process.

This registration demo gives you a step-by-step tutorial of the online registration process prior to clicking the “Register Now” link on the “Provider Connection” area of www.triwest.com. To see the demonstration, just select “Registration Demo” above the “Registration Now” link.

Should you decide to become a registered user of TriWest Healthcare Alliance’s secured online demo sites, you can:

- Check eligibility online
- View patient benefit information
- Check the status of your requested referrals/authorizations
- Check the status of referrals/authorizations for which you are the approved servicing provider
- Review and update consult tracking feedback reports
- Submit claims online
- Check claim status

The registration process was changed to use your provider information currently in the claims system for authentication.

And another new feature of the online registration process is the ability to receive your password by e-mail. Once you have your password, you’ll have immediate access to the secured Web site. Previously, providers or their staff members attempting to register for the Web site had to wait several days to receive a temporary password by mail to complete the registration process and access their account.

To authenticate and register instantly on the demo site, you and/or your staff must have claims information on file with Wisconsin Physicians Service. When registering, you will need to provide Internal Control Numbers for two patients from the explanations of benefits, along with the dates of birth for those two patients.

If you are authenticated upon registration, an e-mail is sent to you so you can activate your account instantly. If you do not have a claim on file, the previous system of receiving a password in the mail remains in place. ■