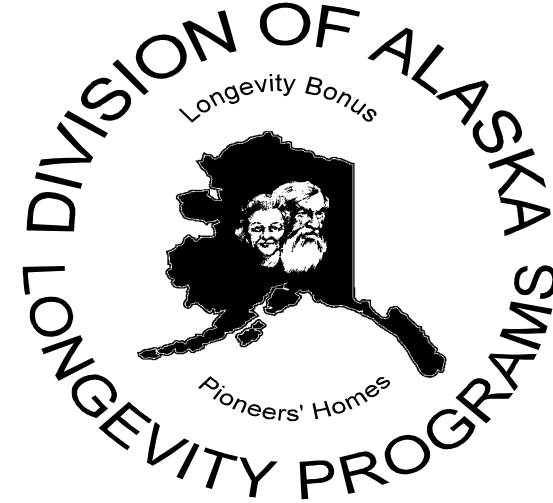


**Division of Alaska Longevity Programs
P.O. Box 110211
Juneau, AK 99811-0211
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Pioneers' Home Pharmacy Program



**State of Alaska
Department of Administration
Division of Alaska Longevity Programs
Alaska Pioneers' Homes**

July 2002

IMPORTANT NOTICE

The Alaska Statute and Alaska Administrative Codes referenced in this booklet are intended for general information purposes only. For any legal information please refer to an official pamphlet of the Alaska Statutes or the published register of the Alaska Administrative Code.

This booklet is one of four booklets available to provide information about the Pioneers' Homes of Alaska.

OTHER BOOKLETS IN THIS SERIES ARE:

Mission and Vision

Payment Assistance

Admission and Discharge Process

THE PIONEERS' HOME PHARMACY

The Pioneers' Home pharmacy program provides pharmaceuticals and pharmacist consultation for the residents of Alaska's Pioneers' Homes. The pharmacy and staff of the program are located at the Anchorage Pioneers' Home. Staff members include licensed pharmacists, pharmacy technicians, and billing personnel.

BENEFITS OF THE PHARMACY PROGRAM

The Pioneers' Home pharmacy program includes several beneficial services, which are as follows:

1. Pharmacists and pharmacy staff work in conjunction with other staff members and are dedicated to serving the residents of the Pioneers' Homes- A primary benefit of having a single-source pharmacy program is to have on-staff pharmacists with knowledge, experience, background and interest in geriatric pharmacy. Prescriptions for Pioneers' Home residents are appropriately filled, packaged, and delivered daily. The Pioneers' Home pharmacists provide the following services:

- Clinical review of residents' medication regimens- our pharmacists review all medications a resident takes to help ensure that risks of interactions and side effects are minimized.
- Communication with residents' healthcare providers concerning medication regimens.
- Staff education concerning medications.

- Overall quality assurance program.
- Resident/family education concerning medications.
- Community education to healthcare providers serving the Pioneers' Homes regarding the Pioneers' Home pharmacy program.

2. Greater efficiency and safety controls-Prior to the implementation of the Pioneers' Home pharmacy program, a number of pharmacy sources were supplying medications to residents in many of the Pioneers' Homes. This inevitably caused differences in the ordering, labeling, packaging, storage, and administration of medications. This fragmentation resulted in inefficiencies and potential safety problems. Solutions to these problems were found in the development of a single pharmacy which would serve and supply all six Pioneers' Homes.

3. Quality pharmaceuticals at a reduced price-Medications can be extremely expensive, especially for seniors. The Pioneers' Home pharmacy provides medications at cost without additional mark-up or dispensing fees. In addition, if a resident is qualified to receive medications through VA or a Native Health Corporation, their discounts are honored.

PARTICIPATION IN THE PIONEERS' HOME PHARMACY PROGRAM

Anyone who resides in a Pioneers' Home may purchase medications through the Pioneers' Home pharmacy program. The pharmacy may or may not provide medications to residents who administer their medications

TOLL-FREE INFORMATION NUMBER

For answers to any questions regarding the Pioneers' Home pharmacy, medications, or pharmacy bills, please call the Pioneers' Home pharmacy during working hours (8:00am-4:30pm, Mon. through Fri., closed Sat, Sun. and most state holidays). In Anchorage, please call 343-7278. Outside Anchorage, please use the statewide toll-free number: 1-888-546-7294.

E-MAIL

For answers to questions regarding the Pioneers' Home pharmacy or medication questions that are not of an urgent nature, e-mail may be used: However, the telephone numbers above are generally the fastest way to receive information.

E-mail regarding medication/pharmacy questions may be sent to: lane_bell@health.state.ak.us
 Billing questions may be sent to:
barbara_hall@health.state.ak.us

12. When are the statements mailed?

The statements are usually mailed out on the last working day of each month.

13. Where should payment be sent?

An addressed envelope is enclosed with all statements. Payments are mailed to:

Division of Alaska Longevity Programs
Attention: Revenue Unit
PO Box 110211
Juneau, AK 99811-0211

For increased convenience, payments may also be deposited in the designated drop boxes located at each Pioneers' Home.

independently without any intervention, reminders, or follow up by staff. However, all residents whose medications are administered to them by Pioneers' Home staff members are required to participate in the program. A single-source pharmacy is considered to be the safest and most efficient basis for medication administration throughout the Pioneers' Homes.

Residents who wish to utilize an outside pharmacy will be allowed to do so with the approval of the Alaska Longevity Programs (ALP) Division Director. The Director will review and approve all such requests from residents who meet the conditions listed below. The Pioneers' Homes will not refuse any resident assistance with medication administration.

A resident who chooses to use an outside pharmacy will be notified by the Pioneers' Home about the increased risk for medication errors or complications from drug interactions when an outside pharmacy utilized. The resident will be informed that this policy, which imposes conditions for using an outside pharmacy, is intended to reduce the risk of medication errors and prevent additional costs to the state of Alaska.

RESIDENT RESPONSIBILITIES IF AN OUTSIDE PHARMACY IS THE PROVIDER OF THEIR MEDICATIONS

1. The resident agrees to pay for all medications obtained through an outside pharmacy with the resident's available income after all Pioneers' Home charges have been met.
2. The Pioneers' Homes will not subsidize the cost of medications obtained from an outside pharmacy.
3. Insurance recoveries are the responsibility of the resident.
4. The resident is responsible for ordering, procurement, and delivery of the medications from the outside pharmacy.
5. The pharmacy provider must agree to package medications in a way that is approved by the ALP Division Director in order to reduce the risk of medication errors and protect the residents' right to a safe environment.
6. A resident utilizing an outside pharmacy must also have an agreement with the outside pharmacist to participate in care plan counseling for the resident when deemed necessary by the Director.

pharmacy charges on the statement are the "total" medication charges. The statement also reflects payments and any insurance reimbursements received.

- b. An itemized list of the individual pharmaceuticals dispensed during the month. This list is provided for information purposes and can be submitted to insurance companies for cost reimbursement. When the pharmacy is billing insurance companies electronically, the charges on the itemized list are the resident's co-payment amounts. For all others, the charges on the itemized list are the total charges for each medication.

11. Does the Pioneers' Home pharmacy bill insurance companies directly?

Currently, the Pioneers' Home pharmacy has the capacity to electronically bill most major insurance plans/companies for medications distributed from the pharmacy. If any resident's insurance company is not available electronically, the Pioneers' Home pharmacy billing clerk will directly bill that insurance company through the mail. To ensure the pharmacy is able to submit claims for reimbursement, it is important that a copy of both sides of the resident's insurance card is on file with the pharmacy. The pharmacy billing clerk needs the resident's insurance information card to properly bill insurance companies on behalf of the resident.

9. Does the pharmacy stock items such as herbal or homeopathic remedies?

No. Herbal and homeopathic remedies are not FDA approved. Because these substances are not FDA approved they cannot be marketed as medication, only as dietary supplements. They also cannot claim to cure or prevent any medical conditions. Since the FDA does not approve these supplements, they are not subject to standardized, scientific testing within the United States for potency, purity, or effectiveness. In addition, some of these substances can have harmful effects, side effects, or interactions with medications. The Pioneers' Home pharmacy does not stock herbal and homeopathic remedies for those reasons. However, it is recognized that some residents wish to use these items. A doctor must order them and the family is responsible for acquiring and administering them to the resident.

10. How does billing for medications occur?

Pioneers' Home residents (or their designated financial representatives) are billed once a month. Pharmacy charges are included in the residents monthly statement along with their rent charge and any supplies used. This provides residents the convenience of making one centralized payment each month. Payment can be made by check, Visa, or Mastercard. In the monthly billing envelope, residents (or their designated financial representatives) receive:

- a. A statement identifying charges for rent, itemized supplies and, if residents receive items from the Pioneers' Home pharmacy, pharmaceuticals. The

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The following section, presented in a question and answer format, addresses the most frequently requested information.

1. How are prescriptions/medication orders filled by the pharmacy?

Prescriptions or medication orders are directly faxed to the Pioneers' Home pharmacy by the prescribing health care professional or by a Pioneers' Home staff member using a toll-free fax number. Mail or courier service is then used to ship medications from the Pioneers' Home pharmacy to the other Pioneers' Homes. Medications are delivered directly to designated Pioneers' Home staff members who are responsible for receiving and appropriately storing the resident's medications.

2. How are refills obtained?

All medications for which a refill has been prescribed are refilled by the pharmacy. Some medications are refilled automatically while other refills need to be requested. Medications in tablet form, which are taken on a routine schedule, are automatically dispensed every month by the pharmacy. Medications taken only as needed or medications in other than tablet form (such as liquids, eye drops, and patches) are dispensed by the pharmacy upon request from the designated Pioneers' Home staff member. Staff members also monitor the resident's supply of medications and request medication refills from the pharmacy as needed.

3. How long does it take for medications to arrive at a Pioneers' Home if shipped from the Pioneers' Home pharmacy located at the Anchorage Pioneers' Home?

Medications are shipped from the Pioneers' Home pharmacy once each working day. Prescriptions, medication orders, or refill requests received after daily shipping has occurred are sent the next working day. It may take up to three working days for newly ordered medications to arrive at a Pioneers' Home. In addition, if a newly ordered medication is not currently in stock at the Pioneers' Home pharmacy and must be specially obtained prior to shipment, it may take up to five working days to arrive at a Pioneers' Home.

4. What happens when a resident requires a medication sooner than delivery can occur?

For medications needed immediately, prescriptions/ medication orders can be partially filled from a stock supply of medications available at each Pioneers' Home. If the medication is not available in the stock supply, it can be acquired at a local pharmacy.

5. Will prescriptions be filled with brand name medications or generic medications?

All prescriptions, when possible, are filled with a generic equivalent. Not all medications are available in a generic form. Some drugs are protected by patents or are supplied by a single company. In these instances, the prescription is filled with the brand name medication, but labeled generically.

6. What is the difference between a generic and a brand name drug?

Besides name and price, there is very little difference. Generic drugs must be therapeutically equivalent. This means they contain the same chemical ingredient, have the same medical effect, and are approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for substitution for brand name drugs.

7. Are generic drugs safe?

Yes. Both generic and brand name drugs are regulated by the FDA. Generic and brand name drugs are tested and approved in the same way. Manufacturers of generic medications must prove to the FDA that a product contains equal amounts of the same active ingredient, and that a generic equivalent has the same medical effect as its brand name counterpart.

8. How are over-the-counter medications obtained?

A prescription is required for over-the-counter medications and the Pioneers' Home pharmacy provides these medications in the same manner as prescription medications. Requiring a prescription for over-the-counter medications helps to ensure that a resident's prescribing health care provider has approved all medications. Also, in utilizing this system, the Pioneers' Home pharmacists and staff are aware of each medication taken by a resident and can screen all medications for harmful side effects and interactions with other medications.