

Forgery Notification Alerts in the Health Network System (HNS), including the Narcotics Monitoring System (NMS)

Frequently Asked Questions

Effective November 23, 2020, the ministry implemented system changes to notify pharmacists in real-time about reported forgeries and/or stolen prescription pads utilizing the ministry's online claim adjudication system - the Health Network System (HNS), which includes the Narcotics Monitoring System (NMS).

Questions and Answers

1. How are pharmacists impacted?

When a pharmacist processes a prescription drug claim through the HNS using the Prescriber ID (license number) of a prescriber that has notified the ministry about previously identified forged prescriptions (generally for various monitored drugs), the HNS will return a Forgery Notification Alert, in 'real-time', as part of the Ontario Drug Benefit (ODB) claim adjudication and NMS adjudication response.

This system-generated alert is cautionary/informational in nature. Pharmacists are required to confirm the validity of all prescriptions prior to submitting to the HNS/NMS, irrespective of whether a Forgery Notification Alert is displayed. When a forgery prescription is suspected the pharmacist should follow their established process to confirm the authenticity of the prescription and use their professional judgment to determine the appropriate course of action, including verifying authenticity by consulting with the prescriber. If the prescription is confirmed to be a forgery, the pharmacist should not proceed with dispensing the prescription drug and should submit a claim reversal.

Prescription Forgery Alert Notices currently being sent out to pharmacies via ONEMail will be discontinued.

2. How is the Forgery Notification Alert displayed?

The Forgery Notification Alert consists of a warning response code 'FX' and a message as follows:

- For ODB Claims Adjudication: 'Possible Forgery-Check authenticity'
- For NMS Adjudication: 'NMS: Possible Forgery-Check authenticity'

The Forgery Notification Alert response code 'FX' will be returned by itself, or together with other response codes resulting from data integrity, eligibility, prospective DUR checks, etc.

For paid/rejected ODB claims or accepted/rejected NMS transactions where there has been a reported forgery and/or stolen prescription pad, the Forgery Notification Alert message will appear in the first Message Data Line. This message will appear even if the 'FX' response code isn't displayed as in the case of insufficient space for all response codes.

When an ODB claim or NMS transaction with a response code 'FX' is successfully reversed upon confirmation of forgery, the Forgery Notification Alert does not display in the claim reversal system response.

3. What should the pharmacist do when a potential forgery is suspected and there is no Forgery Notification Alert on the system?

The Forgery Notification Alert is cautionary/informational in nature and appears when there has been a reported forgery and/or stolen prescription pad for specific drugs (mostly monitored drugs). Pharmacists are required to confirm the validity of all prescriptions prior to submitting to the HNS/NMS, irrespective of whether a Forgery Notification Alert is displayed.

If a prescription forgery is suspected, the pharmacist should follow their established process to confirm the authenticity of the prescription and use their professional judgment to determine the appropriate course of action, including verifying authenticity by consulting with the prescriber.

If the prescription is confirmed to be a forgery, the pharmacist should not proceed with dispensing the prescription drug and should submit a claim reversal.

The pharmacist and the associated prescriber should contact the Ontario Drug Benefit program at drugprogramsdelivery@ontario.ca to report the occurrence of a forgery. The following information is required when reporting a prescription forgery:

- The prescriber details on the forged prescription including prescriber name, address, phone/fax number;
- The name(s) of the drug(s) mentioned on the forgeries (if known); and
- Attach a copy of the prescription and any additional forged prescription pages you may have.

4. How long will be the Forgery Notification Alert remain active on the system?

The Forgery Notification Alert will be active on the HNS for sixty (60) calendar days from initial set-up, unless the prescriber requests that it be extended. Setting up a specific time period will ensure that the Forgery Notification Alert will not remain active on the HNS for an indefinite period.

Extending the duration of the alert past the initial period would be based on a newly identified prescription forgery and an additional request from the prescriber. The ministry will

extend the Forgery Notification Alert for an additional sixty (60) calendar days only when it receives another report/request from the prescriber.

At any given time, the ministry may inactivate the Forgery Notification Alert at the request of the prescriber.

If a prescriber becomes 'inactive' (due to death, retirement, or suspension of license), the Forgery Notification Alert will continue to remain active on the HNS until the 60 day time period is over, or until such time that ministry receives a request to inactivate the Forgery Notification Alert from the prescriber or an authorized agent of the prescriber, whichever comes earlier.

5. How are prescribers impacted?

There are no new requirements or responsibilities for prescribers related to the implementation of the automated Forgery Notification Alert process.

Prescribers should continue to report prescription forgeries (including stolen prescription pads) to the ministry. It is the responsibility of pharmacists to verify the authenticity of all prescriptions and prescribers should continue to respond to authenticity verification inquiries from pharmacists as well as report to the ministry any new/additional incidents and/or requests for an extension or inactivation of a Forgery Notification Alert.

In the event of death/retirement/ suspended license, where possible the prescriber's office should continue to respond to authenticity verification requests from pharmacists, as well as advise the ministry whether an existing Forgery Notification Alert needs to be inactivated.

The frequency of authentication inquiries from pharmacists may increase as a result of pharmacists being notified in real-time about previously identified forgeries.

6. What happens when the ODB claim or NMS submission transaction is related to a prescriber who is retired, deceased or whose licence is suspended?

Claims for inactive prescribers will initially be rejected with Response Code "61" (Prescriber ID error); however, if resubmitted by the pharmacy with an Intervention Code "MH", the system will send alerts if there is an active Forgery Notification Alert set-up for the Prescriber ID and DIN/PIN.

7. Are there any impacts to Pharmacy Software Vendors?

Pharmacy Software Vendors need to be aware that a new response code and message have been implemented in the HNS, however, no Pharmacy Software Vendor Conformance Testing is required.