

## Who's Checking Your Prescriptions?

(NAPSA)—A lot more happens behind the pharmacy counter than most patients realize.

For one thing, most pharmacies have software to check the prescriptions they dispense for dangerous drug interactions. For another, health plans have even more extensive databases. Patients may fill prescriptions in different drug stores and may not alert pharmacists to allergies or medical conditions. Health plans, however, collect detailed records on all the patients and prescriptions they cover. The companies' medical staffs review each covered drug carefully, thoroughly researching the clinical data. What's more, virtually all health plans perform a "drug utilization review," checking for adverse reactions to current medications, allergies and medical conditions.

That means, by the time you receive your medication, it's been reviewed by both your plan and your pharmacist. Nevertheless, you should still check it yourself. Be sure it's the correct drug, the correct dosage, and that you understand what it does, possible side effects and how to take it correctly. Your pharmacist will be happy to help you.

"There's a bewildering number of drugs available, many with similar names," explains Judith Cahill, executive director of the Academy of Managed Care Pharmacy. "In spite of state-of-the-art databases and medical processes, humans make mistakes. Always check your medications with your pharmacist if they are unfamiliar to you."

The Academy of Managed Care Pharmacy is a professional association of managed care pharmacists who serve patients and the public by the promotion of wellness and rational drug therapy.

You can learn more about AMCP and managed care pharmacy at: <http://www.amcp.org>.