



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
Southern Arizona VA Health Care System
Tucson, AZ 85723

In Reply Refer To: 678/13-119

JUN 13 2013

The Honorable Ron Barber
United States Congressman
3945 East Ft. Lowell, Suite 211
Tucson, AZ 85712
Attn: Patty Valera

Dear Congressman Barber:

This is in response to your inquiry dated June 3, 2013, on behalf of Mr. Anthony Miner O'Connell, who contacted your office regarding his medication renewals from the Southern Arizona VA Health Care System (SAVAHCS). I asked Ms. Bernadette Schaeffer, Outpatient Pharmacy Program Manager to review your request.

In reviewing Mr. O'Connell's records it was determined that he does not have a telephone. Ms Schaeffer did contact his daughter Ms. Kate Simmons on June 7, 2013. Ms. Schaeffer confirmed that, Mr. O'Connell is receiving medications from the Consolidated Medication Outpatient Pharmacy and/or the SAVAHCS. He is also receiving medication from the Northern VA Health Care System (NAVAHCS). Ms Simmons was surprised that her father was still concerned about his prescriptions, as he had recently told her that he had resolved the issue. Ms. Schaeffer provided Ms. Simmons with her contact information if any issues with his medication arise.

1 fill VA 1

1 fill VA 2

The SAVAHCS strives to provide quality and compassionate care to all of our Veterans. We are very concerned with patient care and the satisfaction of the Veterans we serve. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this letter, please contact Ms. Bernadette Schaeffer at (520) 792-1450, extension 5394.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "JHG", is written over the word "Sincerely,".

Jonathan H. Gardner, MPA, FACHE
Director
Southern Arizona
VA Health Care System

1 Fill 2 VAs

I could not request my medicines through the VA web site because the "0 Refills Remaining" status would not allow it and my direct requests to the Director and the Pharmacist did not get a response. Then, without explanation, two VA's sent me medicine for 1 fill.

VA 1, the Tucson VA, sent me medicine on May 9, 2013. The bottles read "Last Refill" and "Fill: 4 of 4", and the enclosed refill request forms read "No Refills Remaining" and "Fill: 4 of 4". This means the first fill is the last fill. Only 1 fill is sent but the "Refill: 4 of 4" makes it appear as if 4 fills were sent.

VA 2, the Prescott VA, started sending me medicine on May 1, 2013. It was sent in three parts: on May 1, June 17, and on June 28, 2013. The bottles read "Last Refill" and "Fill: 4 of 4" or "Fill: 5 of 5", and the enclosed refill request forms read "No Refills Remaining" and "Refill: 4 of 4" or "Refill: 5 of 5". This means the first fill is the last fill. Only 1 fill is sent but the "Refill: 4 of 4" or "Refill: 5 of 5" makes it appear as if 4 or 5 fills were sent.

What is the intent of sending 1 fill but making it appear as if 4 or 5 fills were sent? Is it a coincidence that two VA's did this? For the same period?

1 Fill VA 1

Tucson VA (SAVAHCS)

VA 1, the Tucson VA, sent me medicine on May 9, 2013. All the bottles say "Provider: Schmeling R.". R. Schmeling is my current primary care provider.

The bottles also say "Last Refill" and "Fill: 4 of 4" and all the enclosed refill request forms say "No Refills Remaining" and "Fill: 4 of 4". This means the first fill is the last fill. Only 1 fill is sent but the "Refill: 4 of 4" makes it appear as if 4 fills were sent.

The VA web site shows there are 0 refills remaining on May 6 and 0 refills remaining on July 1. It is not possible for 4 refills of 90 days each to occur in the 56 days between May 6 and July 1.

What is the intent of sending 1 fill but making it appear as if 4 fills were sent?

SOUTHERN AZ VA HCS, AZ 85723-0001 Ph: (800) 470-6262
678
Provider: SCHMELING R.
RX# 4973802
ANTHONY MINER OCONNELL
TAKE ONE TABLET BY MOUTH EVERY DAY FOR ENLARGED PROSTATE
NDC #: 00093-7355-56 Discard after 11/28/2013
Qty: 30 of 90 Last Refill
FINASTERIDE 5MG TAB
Blue Oblong tablet, 93 / 7355

SOUTHERN AZ VA HCS, AZ 85723-0001 Ph: (800) 470-6262
678
Provider: SCHMELING R.
RX# 4973802
ANTHONY MINER OCONNELL
TAKE ONE TABLET BY MOUTH EVERY DAY FOR ENLARGED PROSTATE
NDC #: 00093-7355-56 Discard after 11/28/2013
Qty: 90 of 90 Last Refill
FINASTERIDE 5MG TAB
Blue Oblong tablet, 93 / 7355

SOUTHERN AZ VA HCS, AZ 85723-0001 Ph: (800) 470-6262
678
Provider: SCHMELING R.
RX# 4973802
ANTHONY MINER OCONNELL
TAKE ONE TABLET BY MOUTH EVERY DAY FOR ENLARGED PROSTATE
NDC #: 00093-7355-56 Discard after 11/28/2013
Qty: 30 of 90 Last Refill
FINASTERIDE 5MG TAB
Blue Oblong tablet, 93 / 7355

Last Refill
Fill 4 of 4

SOUTHERN AZ VA HCS, TUCSON, AZ 85723-0001 Ph: (800) 470-6262
678
Provider: SCHMELING R.
RX# 4973800
ANTHONY MINER OCONNELL
TAKE ONE TABLET BY MOUTH EVERY DAY FOR ENLARGED PROSTATE
NDC #: 00173-0249-75 Discard after 11/28/2013
Qty: 90 of 90 Last Refill
DIGOXIN (LANOXIN) TABLETS
SCORED ROUND WHITE TABLETS

SOUTHERN AZ VA HCS, TUCSON, AZ 85723-0001 Ph: (800) 470-6262
678
Provider: SCHMELING R.
RX# 4973808
ANTHONY MINER OCONNELL
TAKE ONE CAPSULE BY MOUTH EVERY DAY ONE-HALF HOUR AFTER THE SAME MEAL FOR PROSTATE
NDC #: 00228-2996-50 Discard After 11/28/2013
Qty: 90 of 90 Last Refill
TAMSULOSIN HCL 0.4MG CAP
Green/ Orange Cap w/ black stripes, TSL04

SOUTHERN AZ VA HCS, AZ 85723-0001 Ph: (800) 470-6262
678
Provider: SCHMELING R.
RX# 4973804
ANTHONY MINER OCONNELL
TAKE ONE TABLET BY MOUTH EVERY DAY FOR ENLARGED PROSTATE
NDC #: 67544-0567-80 Discard after 11/28/2013
Qty: 180 of 180 Last Refill
METOPROLOL TARTRATE TABLETS
White Round Scored Tablet, M 180

Provider: Schmeling R.
[Bottles dated] 05/09/2013

1 Fill VA 2

Prescott VA (NAVAHCS)

VA 2, the Prescott VA, sent me medicine on May 1, June 17, and June 28, 2013. All the bottles say "Provider: Nanson J.". Nanson J. was my previous primary care provider.

The bottles also say "Last Refill" and "Fill: 4 of 4" or "Fill: 5 of 5", and the enclosed refill request forms say "No Refills Remaining" and "Refill: 4 of 4" or "Refill: 5 of 5. This means the first fill is the last fill. Only 1 fill is sent but the "Refill: 4 of 4" or "Refill: 5 of 5" makes it appear as if 4 or 5 fills were sent.

The VA web site shows there are 0 refills remaining on May 6 and 0 refills remaining on July 1. It is not possible for 4 fills of 90 days each or 5 refills of 60 days each to occur in the 56 days between May 6 and July 1.

What is the intent of sending 1 fill but making it appear as if 4 or 5 fills were sent?

(Comment: I did not print out the refill status just before May 1 because the status can only be printed out the day it is given. I received the medicine dated May 1 after May 1: no notification or explanation was given.: and It took me some time to realize that I should try to protect myself from a frame up by printing out the refill status each day.)



Without explanation, I started to receive medicine from VA Prescott's Dr Nanson on May 1, 2013.

I don't remember receiving any medicine from Dr Nanson since he stopped being my primary care provider around September of 2012.

Last Refill
Fill 5 of 5

Provider: Nanson J.
[Bottle dated] 05/01/2013



Last Refill
Fill 4 of 4

Provider: Nanson J.
[Bottles dated] 06/17/2013



Last Refill
Fill 4 of 4

Provider: Nanson J.
[Bottle dated] 06/28/2013