

COMPANY POLICIES SOG-12
ISSUED 10/95

COMPANY POLICIES

RIGHT TO REFUSE TO FILL A PRESCRIPTION

Clinical Judgement of the Pharmacist

A pharmacist may refuse to fill/refill a prescription for ethical reasons involving clinical judgements. Examples of ethical reasons for refusing to fill a prescription are:

1. Filling the prescription is illegal.
2. Filling the prescription poses unacceptable health risks to the patient.
3. The pharmacist feels that the therapy is inappropriate.
4. The prescriber is practicing outside of the scope of his/her medical expertise.

In these situations, it is expected that the pharmacist is a health care advocate working to communicate with other practitioners in the best interest of the patient.

Moral Objection of the Pharmacist

A pharmacist may also refuse to fill a prescription on the basis of moral or religious beliefs. In these instances, the pharmacist has a duty to the patient to refer the patient either to another pharmacist or pharmacy so that the patient can receive appropriate therapy. Smith's respects the right of pharmacists to their individual beliefs. Pharmacists are not, however, permitted to impose their beliefs onto the customers. Conceivably, there may be extreme instances where a pharmacist's religious beliefs might be so extreme so as to place him/her in situations of moral conflict at such frequency as to justify a change in practice settings. For example, a pharmacist who refuses to dispense oral contraceptives should probably not practice in a retail setting where they will constantly be confronted with a situation that they are not comfortable with.