

We are aware of operations that falsely claim to be licensed by the Minnesota Board of Pharmacy. These operations send e-mail or faxes that offer prescription drugs for sale and refer the reader to a website. The website address frequently changes, so we are unable to warn the public about the most current address used. Also, the operations use various names, with the two most commonly used being Canadian Health Care and Mall and U.S. Drugs. (Please note that the Board does license a legitimate pharmacy that is named U.S. Drugs. That pharmacy does not distribute spam or faxes). The “Drug Reselling License” found on some of the websites was not issued by the Board and is fraudulent.

The Board has never received a complaint concerning e-mail, fax and telephone frauds that has involved a pharmacy that is actually licensed by the Board. Instead, these operations appear to be engaged in one of several types of illegal activities. In some cases, they may actually ship what appear to be drugs to the people who place orders with them. However, they are doing so illegally since they are not licensed by the Board. Consumers are warned against ordering from such operations because the “drugs” shipped may actually be counterfeit products. In other cases, the operations are nothing more than credit card scams. They do not ship any product but do make charges to the credit cards of people who place “orders” with them.

The Board has no authority to investigate or take action against these operations. The Board only has authority over those businesses and individuals to whom we issue licenses. If we have reason to believe that someone is practicing pharmacy without being licensed or that an unlicensed business is operating as a pharmacy, we have to turn the matter over to the appropriate law enforcement agency. In these cases, determining where the operation is actually located is extremely difficult, making it hard to pursue any action. The Board has turned information over to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration.

Consumers can verify licensure of pharmacists and pharmacies in the “Online Services” section of the Board’s website. They can also contact the Board Office during regular business hours of 8:00AM – 4:30PM, Monday-Friday to verify a license. Consumers are advised to never give personal information or credit card numbers to anyone who contacts them about pharmacy services or prescription drugs if that contact was unsolicited.

The Federal Trade Commission handles complaints involving fraudulent Internet and e-mail activities. Consumers can file a complaint with them at 1-877-382-4357 or send a copy of the suspected bogus e-mail to:

Federal Trade Commission  
CRC-240  
Washington, DC 20580

In cases involving faxes and where faxes are not prohibited by law, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) recently issued rules which require senders to post clear and conspicuous “opt-out” notice on the first page of each unsolicited fax they send. This new rule requires fax senders to honor opt-out requests within a period not to exceed 30 days. Consumers can file a complaint by calling the FCC at 1-888-225-5322. The FCC also regulates and handles complaints involving telephones including text messages. Consumers can file a complaint on line using their FORM 1088 at [http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/complaints\\_tcpa.html](http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/complaints_tcpa.html) or via e-mail at [fccinfo@fcc.gov](mailto:fccinfo@fcc.gov).

Consumers who have actually had charges applied to their credit card should contact their credit card company. Also, they may want to contact the local law enforcement agency, such as police department or county sheriff’s office.