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The Customer/Patient Touchpoint— Literally and Electronically: Internet Pharmacies, Pill Mills, and Other Lurking Dangers

OVERVIEW

In Chapter 5, we were left standing in line, waiting for our prescription to be filled by the pharmacist. There are many sick people waiting in line, and the pharmacists and their assistants are working very hard to fill everyone's prescription. There are multiple ways that a customer or patient can get a prescription filled.

The most common way is to have the prescription sent to the pharmacy by the doctor or nurse and to have the patient pick up the needed pharmaceutical drugs. Patients can also use mail-order pharmacies. Mail-order pharmacies are usually associated with insurers or retail pharmacies. The doctor or nurse sends the prescription to the mail-order pharmacies, and the pharmaceutical drugs are delivered to you by mail. The drugs may cost less by mail, but it does take time. People who take pharmaceutical drugs on a regular basis for long-term problems (e.g., my wife and her levothyroxine, my friend's Parkinson's medications) are good candidates to use mail-order pharmacies. It may go without saying that short-term medication needs and temperature-controlled medications (the yellow tote medications) should go through a traditional pharmacy.

Another alternative for the patient/customer is to use an Internet or online pharmacy. Both the mail-order pharmacies and Internet or online