

NABP + VIPPS Certification

Petmeds is not VIPPS compliant/eligible. It matters a LOT to prescribers.

Every state has a “**Board of Pharmacy**” that monitors their state’s pharmacies. These boards provide standards of record keeping, compliance with state and federal law.

“I’m going to turn you in to **the Board!!**” Yeah, **THAT** Board.

Anyway. These Boards of Pharmacy operate together and independently and one day, they decided to band together and create **uniformity** in the administration of standards and applicable laws. So that Georgia pharmacy-law looked like Mississippi pharmacy-law.

The **National Association of Boards of Pharmacy** was formed (1904). NABP.pharmacy Further, they founded a .pharmacy TLD.

Let me explain that: Some businesses have .COM and .NET after their name.

If you’re a “real” pharmacy you can get .PHARMACY after your business name. You have a license to operate and the State acknowledges you.

But that doesn’t mean you’re in compliance with state and federal law.

What proves that your business is compliant with state and federal laws? **VIPPS certification**.

VIPPS Verified Internet Pharmacy Practice Sites (1999)

NABP started this certification program in 1999 as Internet pharmacies started popping up.

If you are **not VIPPS certified**, you have been found to be noncompliant with one or more of a state’s pharmacy laws. That’s a deal breaker for me.

You can do that without ‘technically’ **breaking** the law, but you are DEFINITELY bending laws. Sadly, with “they’re only dog drugs”, you can break the law and enforcement isn’t likely, because the government is overwhelmed with opiate regulation right now. That’s a fact. There are only about a hundred FDA field agents directly inspecting pharmacies for violations.

Let’s put that in perspective: There are approximately **67,000 pharmacies** in the United States. Almost half (33,000) are located within drug stores, grocery stores, hospitals, department stores, medical clinics, surgery clinics, universities, nursing homes, prisons, and other facilities. 100 Field agents. And they’re worrying about heartworm prevention. Uh huh.

Here are things you cannot do and still be Board/VIPPS compliant.

- Wholesale (source) drugs or products from other distribution channels
- Wholesale (source) drugs or products from other countries.
- Neglect quality control and supply chain standards, allowing the business to sell counterfeit product whether knowingly or not.
- Filling prescriptions without a documented, legitimate protocol for verifying prescriber information and licensure.
- Filling prescriptions without documented prescriber authorization.

Sadly, the very first three knock online pet pharmacies (In particular: PetCareRx and PetMeds) out of the running. The last two are variable between online pharmacies but is all too common.

So why don’t these online retailers seem to care? Because their television ads trump VIPPS certification handily. Their business is not adversely affected by a lack of VIPPS certification because people are responding to the marketing.

But they’re not the ones who lose their licenses if sensitive information about clients is pillaged by shoddy record-custody, or filled without a VCPR, or sued if a prescribed item is filled incorrectly, or filled under my name/clinic name without my knowledge.