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E-Prescribing

Electronic prescribing (e-prescribing) occurs when a prescriber uses a computer or handheld device with software that enables the prescriber to:

- ✓ Electronically route the prescription to the patient's choice of pharmacy
- ✓ Electronically access a patient's prescription benefit
- ✓ Electronically access a patient's medication history

Some of the features of e-prescribing require additional software from the electronic health record (EHR) or e-prescribing vendor. Check with your vendor to find out what is required to implement the various e-prescribing functionality listed above.

Why E-Prescribe?

E-prescribing is a recognized and proven effective tool to improve patients' health outcomes and reduce costs.

Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS) implemented an initiative with its health plans to increase e-prescribing. The goal of the initiative is for Medicaid prescribers to use e-prescribing for at least 70 percent of all original prescriptions.

Advantages of E-Prescribing

- Creates one workflow for all electronic prescriptions – controlled and non-controlled substances
- Reduces fraud and abuse by preventing forgeries and stolen prescription pads
- Eliminates phone calls and inaccuracy due to illegible hand-written prescriptions
- Decreases adverse drug events and drug-to-drug interactions
- Condenses record keeping for patients' prescription histories
- Decreases therapeutic duplication
- Increases patient adherence

Available Resources

Health Current can help by answering questions and assisting you overcome any barriers you may encounter. Email erx@healthcurrent.org or call us at (602) 449-7873.

Additional resources and reference information are also available at www.healthcurrent.org/information-center/e-prescribing/.

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FAQs about E-Prescribing

Q: Is e-prescribing of controlled substances legal?

A: Yes. In 2010 the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) issued regulations permitting prescribers to enter and send prescriptions electronically to pharmacies and enables pharmacies to receive, dispense and archive electronic prescriptions. Then in April 2012, Arizona's governor signed into law legislation making e-prescribing of controlled substances (EPCS) legal in Arizona.

Q: How do I get started e-prescribing controlled substances (EPCS)?

A: You will need specialized software and a two-factor authentication device or process.

Providers should follow these steps to get started:

1. Contact your EHR vendor and ask if they are certified to support EPCS
2. Complete identity proofing requirements
3. Obtain dual (two-factor) authentication device or process
4. Set up security access controls
5. Adhere to digital signature and audit requirements

Q: Isn't e-prescribing more likely to encourage hacking and HIPAA violations?

A: Absolutely not. Electronic prescriptions are much more secure than written prescriptions, which can be tampered with, lost or stolen.

Q: Can all pharmacies accept electronic prescriptions?

A: There aren't any known barriers to pharmacies accepting electronic prescriptions. Virtually all chain and independent pharmacies in Arizona are set up to receive electronic prescriptions.

Q: My colleagues say that e-prescribing is confusing and stressful. Is this true?

A: It may seem this way at first. However, once you begin using it, you'll find that it'll save time and has the potential to decrease errors.

Q: What's the typical timeframe to become registered to e-prescribe?

A: The process can take longer than 30 days so it's in your practice's best interest to contact your EHR vendor as soon as possible to begin the process.