

“How To” E-Prescribing Tips for Independent and Rural Pharmacies

What is the Value of E-Prescribing?

Electronic renewals have advantages over faxing, including:

- a. Lowers workflow costs that can be as much as 10% for pharmacy technicians.
 - i. Reduces callbacks to physician practices.
 - ii. Decreases manual entry, providing time savings and continuity of information, which greatly improves customer satisfaction.
- b. Supports better relationships with physicians, which can increase adoption.
- c. Supports better relationships with patients.
- d. May allow for faster dispensing.
- e. Early adopters may have increased benefit from participating in incentive programs.
- f. All patient and prescription information can be shown on one screen.

How Should You Prepare?

- a. Make sure your pharmacy software is ready:
 - i. Current standards
 - a. Determine current requirements for e-prescribing software. (Note: these can vary from state to state and are very dynamic in the industry. [Go to HIMSS E-Prescribing Wiki](http://himsseprescribingwiki.pbworks.com/) at <http://himsseprescribingwiki.pbworks.com/> for more information).
 - b. Have current or next-to-latest release of software version available.
 - ii. Should be able to use same communication connection/switch as is currently used for adjudication.
- b. Verify how the pharmacy functionality fits with workflow and research and make plans for necessary adjustments.
- c. Be sure to have an open communication with your board of pharmacy early in the process to understand any requirements and approval processes.
- d. Research the possibility for the need to sign a new agreement with your software vendor or research options to change vendors if necessary to receive transactions.
- e. Define an activation schedule to include a specific date for e-prescribing training, installation, and activation.
- f. Determine needs for any additional staff training and plan accordingly.
 - i. Identify key prescribers in your area by visiting Surescripts.com to partner and learn e-prescribing “how to’s” and plan implementation together.

Training Tips

- a. Include all staff within the pharmacy.
- b. Identify potential incoming e-prescriptions:
 - i. Who, how often, and where to check for further information.
 - ii. Identify where the information is coming from (who will check; where will they check; how often do they need to check; etc.).
 - iii. Does the information display when it is sent?
 - iv. Determine how patient matching occurs and the process for accurately determining patient identity.
- c. Establish the method of converting an e-prescription to a pharmacy system prescription order.
- d. Decide on a refill request process (Does your pharmacy reach out to patients for refills/renewals?).
- e. Evaluate methods to be used for clarifying prescription information.
- f. Establish method for tracking down missing e-prescriptions.

- g. Establish process for handling controlled substances that currently cannot be e-prescribed.

Communication

- a. Physicians
 - i. Inform physician practices of e-prescription capability, so they can configure their systems to send e-prescriptions digitally rather than via electronic fax.
 - ii. Discuss advantages of electronic renewal requests with physician practices.
- b. Patients
 - i. Be sure patients understand that e-prescriptions still require time to fill. Set patient expectations on a realistic turn-around-time.
 - ii. Be sure patients are aware that controlled substances are still handled via paper and they must provide a traditional paper prescription.
- c. State board of pharmacy
 - i. Inform your state board of pharmacy of your e-prescribing capability and discuss with them how to comply with appropriate regulations, as required.

Other Considerations

- a. Patients may have high expectations of unrealistic pharmacy fill times (light speed only applies to prescription transmission).
- b. Be aware that missing e-prescriptions and missing content will still require a call to the prescriber.
- c. Currently there are associated costs to e-prescribe: cost per transaction is on average \$0.20 to \$0.30 (for example, a refill consists of two transactions).
- d. E-prescribing standards are evolving and it is critical to stay current with your vendor software updates.
- e. The process may still require transcription of e-prescription information to drug and sig coding within your pharmacy system.
- f. Controlled substances still require paper prescriptions although efforts are underway at the federal level to provide standards to allow e-prescribing.
- g. It is important to maintain two-way communication with physician offices (i.e., the ability to contact the prescriber for clarification to facilitate timeliness and personal conversation as needed).
- h. There will continue to be potential errors in transmission, such as incompatible exchange of data. The expertise of the pharmacist will always be critical to validate the accuracy of any prescription.
- i. It is very important to keep up to date by frequently visiting the HIMSS E-Prescribing wiki.

Opportunities

There may be state, federal, or other grant money and/or incentive programs to implement e-prescribing for both providers and pharmacists that could include covering the cost of software, connectivity and communication, training, and hardware costs.