

SELECTED BEST PRACTICES

Integrating computer-to-computer connectivity with pharmacies

This information is provided to you by The Pharmacy Health Information Exchange™, operated by SureScripts® which facilitates the secure transmission of prescription information between physicians and pharmacists.

- 1. Talking With Pharmacies:** When talking with pharmacists or pharmacy staff, do not refer to a prescription being sent “by/through SureScripts” or refer to the name of your e-prescribing system, as the pharmacist might not be familiar with these names. It is far better to refer to a prescription being sent electronically – directly to the pharmacy computer.
- 2. DEA Regulations:** Follow DEA regulations by refraining from transmitting prescriptions for controlled substances electronically until these regulations are changed to allow electronic transmission. Prescriptions for Schedule II drugs can never be sent electronically. Hand-signed hard copies of prescriptions for Schedule III through V drugs can be sent using manual fax technologies. Neither computer-generated faxes containing electronic signatures nor totally electronic prescriptions for controlled substances can be sent to pharmacies at this time.
- 3. Pharmacy Information:** Ensure that your patient’s preferred pharmacy is already populated or entered into your system when the patient checks in, or during the visit. Be certain the correct pharmacy location is entered. If the pharmacy is connected to the Pharmacy Health Information Exchange, prescriptions will be sent electronically. Otherwise the prescription will automatically be sent by fax.
- 4. Patient Information:** Please also make sure that you regularly update patient information with accurate data such as birth date, as it is essential to have the correct birth date when submitting prescriptions to the pharmacy.
- 5. Fill-Time Expectations:** Inform patients that while the prescription is transmitted directly into the pharmacy’s computer system, this does NOT necessarily mean it will be filled faster. Prescriptions are typically filled on a first-come first served basis. There is an advantage to electronic prescriptions in that a patient doesn’t have to make a trip to the pharmacy to drop off the prescription and another to pick it up. Patients should call the pharmacy to confirm that their prescriptions are ready. Patients may also wish to mention that prescriptions were sent electronically, not by telephone, fax or paper prescription.
- 6. Advise Patients to Call Their Pharmacies to Request Prescription Refills.** This will reduce the volume of calls coming into your office from pharmacies as well as from patients. It will further streamline the process of authorizing prescription refills by taking full advantage of electronic connectivity between the pharmacy and your practice.
- 7. Respond to Refill Requests as Soon as Possible, and Always Within 24 Hours.** If pharmacies do not see a response within that time frame, they may send duplicate refill authorization requests. This may also happen if the patient is waiting in the pharmacy to pick up a renewed prescription and it has not yet been authorized. It is helpful to designate a staff member or prescriber to manage refill requests. The designated person should check incoming renewals from pharmacies regularly throughout the day. A backup should also be designated if this person is out of the office or otherwise unavailable.
- 8. Keep Your Software Vendor Informed About Any Problems.** By keeping your software vendor in the loop on issues that arise, you ensure that problems can be fixed quickly, and help to eliminate future issues before they occur. Be sure that everyone who uses the electronic prescribing system is aware of the support process.
- 9. Create Electronic Prescribing Champions.** Practices are most successful when there are designated champions within the practice who become experts on the electronic prescribing system and are available to help other users overcome any issues or challenges they may encounter.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- 1. Electronic Prescribing “Reminder Cards”** are available through your vendor. These cards can be given to patients in lieu of a paper prescription. Each card carries a note reminding the pharmacist that the prescription was sent electronically.
- 2. “Our Practice is Connected” fax/letter template** – designed to inform pharmacies in your area that you are now able to receive and send prescription information electronically – is also available through your vendor. You can simply print this onto your letterhead, or stamp your contact information on the form, and fax or mail it to your pharmacy of choice.

