

Take Your PIC

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National News

Surescripts to Adopt Standard Aimed at EHR Meaningful Use

Surescripts will adopt a new version of a technical standard that's recommended by federal regulators as part of a \$19 billion incentive program to encourage greater use of EHRs. The standard – referred to by industry participants as “NCPDP SCRIPT 10.6” – allows physicians using electronic health record software to electronically access prescription information from pharmacies and health plans while also making use of electronic prescriptions.

Assuming the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services adopts the National Council for Prescription Drug Programs (NCPDP) SCRIPT 10.6 as a standard under the MMA, pharmacies, pharmacy benefit managers, health plans, as well as makers of EHR software can on May 1, 2010, begin certifying and deploying their systems to support the Surescripts implementation of the NCPDP SCRIPT 10.6 standard.

The standard will allow physicians and other prescribers using software certified by Surescripts to continue a secure, electronic link to the Surescripts network and thousands of retail pharmacies, pharmacy benefit managers and health plans nationwide. With patient consent, this link will allow physicians and other prescribers to continue to access their patients' prescription histories. Prescribers using the standard can also use the Surescripts network to send e-prescriptions to any of 51,000 retail pharmacies (representing 84 percent of all retail pharmacies in the United States) and six of the largest mail-order pharmacies. [Read more](#)

E-Prescribers to More than Double in 2009

The number of U.S. physicians and other medical professionals prescribing electronically is expected to more than double this year, enticed by higher Medicare payments tied to the technology's use, Dow Jones Newswires/Wall Street Journal reports. About one-quarter of doctors are currently e-prescribing, and 110 million of 3.7 billion prescriptions in the first eight months of this year were written electronically. In January, Medicare began a program to pay a 2 percent bonus for physicians who start e-prescribing; smaller bonuses will be available in future years, through 2013.

Physicians can choose from more than 200 types of e-prescribing and electronic health record (EHR) systems that have been certified and are connected to the Surescripts network: a 38 percent increase over the number available at the start of 2009. The growth in certified software makes the vital capabilities that define e-prescribing available to more physicians and the communities they serve. [More on Surescripts](#)

Meanwhile, despite federal stimulus money backing the effort, hospitals have been slow to join health information exchanges, even when they are readily available, reports Crain's Detroit Business. That's a problem, because they control the greatest concentration of patient records among any providers, and the value of the exchange to all members increases as more records become available. The reasons for hospital reluctance are complex but come down to some combination of money, competitive strategy and technological challenge. [More on hospitals](#)

Please forward this newsletter to those in your organization that can benefit from the information. Note that a number of useful links to the Internet are embedded. To fully benefit from the content presented, view this newsletter electronically and click on the [green type](#). Electronic versions of *Take Your PIC* can be accessed at www.nmmra.org/resources/?group=63.

Comments on our new format? We'd love to hear from you!

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Legislation Would Provide Health Care IT Loans to Pharmacists

A provision in the Small Business Financing and Investment Act of 2009 (HR 3854) would make state-licensed pharmacists and other health care providers eligible for health IT loans. The legislation would create a health IT lending program to provide reduced-cost health IT loans guaranteed up to 90 percent, with a subsidized deferment period of up to three years. The legislation has been approved by the House Small Business Committee and now goes to the House. [Click to read more](#)

General Practitioners Write Most Prescriptions for Mental Health Drugs

Researchers from Thomson Reuters and the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) have found that of the 472 million prescriptions written for psychotropic medications during the study period, general practitioners prescribed 62 percent of antidepressants, 52 percent of stimulants (mainly drugs to treat attention deficit hyperactivity disorder), 37 percent of antipsychotics, and 22 percent of anti-mania medications. Pediatricians were included as general practitioners and wrote 25 percent of all stimulant prescriptions. [More](#)

NMPIC Updates

NMPIC Regional Meetings: NMPIC held a highly successful first regional meeting in Las Cruces last month, featuring MD, medication safety program director from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). A series of these meetings is planned in northern New Mexico, with presentations focusing on the role of the medical home. The first meeting is being held in conjunction with New Mexico Hospital Association's Board of Directors meeting in Santa Fe on February 8; the second meeting will be February 8 in Española and February 9 in Taos. E-prescribing vendors have been invited to conduct demonstrations of their products.

PIMs: Dan Budnitz, MD, also provided the keynote address at NMPIC's extended Potentially Inappropriate Medications (PIM) Advisory Board meeting on September 2, which drew many supporting organizations supporting the PIM clinical recommendations.

NMPIC also held two meetings of the PIM Advisory Board to finalize reference algorithms for selected diseases/conditions and an educational brochure for beneficiaries. To date, this board has developed 10 reference algorithms to support decision making. In addition, the guidelines and reference algorithms are available on the Web as reference tools.

NMMRA and the PIM Advisory Board gave a keynote presentation at the annual meeting of the New Mexico Osteopathic Medical Association on the PIM clinical recommendations.

MTM Project: The recruitment package was sent out to 6,789 additional Medicare beneficiaries, and the MTM recruitment phone line was activated to support inquiries.

A medication adherence tool was developed to support MTM and will be available on the Web portal. Additionally, three MTM webinars were held in October for participating pharmacists and will be available on the Web site.

E-Prescribing Project: Recruitment for the phase 2 continues. Approximately 50 physicians have joined the project and are now working with vendors in selecting e-prescribing solutions. About 40 more physicians will be accepted to participate. If you are interested in participating, please contact [Galina Priloutskaya](#).