



News for Immediate Release

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E-Prescribing Trend is Growing; Pennsylvania Ranks 11th in Nation

Harrisburg – The Pennsylvania eHealth Collaborative today released results from national and statewide studies that show e-prescribing - the electronic transmission of patient prescriptions by a health care provider to a pharmacy - is growing rapidly.

According to SureScripts, a national e-prescribing network, Pennsylvania ranks 11th among states for adoption and use of e-prescribing. SureScripts identified 2,719 independent pharmacies actively e-prescribing through its network.

"E-prescribing can enhance patient safety through improved accuracy. It can also reduce health care costs by helping to identify potentially dangerous drug interactions, as well as when less expensive drug alternatives are available," said Robert Torres, Pennsylvania's Health Information Technology Coordinator. "We are pleased to see that the vast majority of Pennsylvania pharmacies are already accepting prescriptions electronically."

SureScripts also identified 246 independent pharmacies that did not appear to be enabled for e-prescribing. The eHealth Collaborative partnered with the Pennsylvania Pharmacists Association, or PPA, to conduct a telephone survey last fall of those pharmacies to find out the reasons why.

A total of 122 pharmacies responded to the survey. Of those, nearly 61 percent (74) are now e-prescribing or said they would be doing so within six months. Approximately 17 percent (21) expressed no interest, or were not e-prescribing due to some valid business reason, such as being a compounding pharmacy or a specialty pharmacy that services such a small group of providers that e-prescribing would not be cost effective and would not yield discernible benefits. The remaining 22 percent (27) were open to e-prescribing at some point in the future, but in many cases face limited IT or financial resources.

"The Collaborative will use a combination of education and active outreach to ensure that those planning to e-prescribe follow through with their plans, and to assist pharmacies that currently lack the resources or face other obstacles to adopt e-prescribing," said Torres.

From now through Aug. 15, health care providers – including pharmacies - can

receive a free year of DIRECT messaging services through an approved health information service provider (HISP). DIRECT provides a simple, secure and standards-based method to encourage electronic exchange of health information among health care providers, particularly those providers that do not have the resources or technical capacity to engage in more comprehensive health information exchange.

Pharmacies and other licensed providers can learn more about DIRECT messaging at www.paehealthcollab.com.

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