How is your Rx handwriting lately?

- Precise as a computer printout
- Clear as a schoolteacher’s
- Average, for a busy MD
- On the creative side
- Forensic graphologist favorite

Whatever your current style, e-prescribing is a great solution for you.
Electronic Prescribing in Illinois

1. Why e-Prescribing?
Electronic Prescribing is an efficient way to improve prescription accuracy and patient safety by allowing physicians to write and transmit prescriptions directly from the point of care to a pharmacy.

Here are some of the many advantages of a new e-prescribing system:
- supports physicians in patient care delivery;
- helps save time, money, and staff resources; and
- increases both patient convenience and practice efficiency.

There are compelling reasons why the perfect time for e-prescribing has arrived. Let's start by looking at the current prescribing environment. Writing prescriptions for patients has changed very little over the past 50 years, while everything else within the health care industry has evolved dramatically.

As a prescribing physician today, you have good reason to feel overwhelmed:
- First, with more than 17,000 trade and generic names for pharmaceuticals marketed in North America, and more emerging from research every month, there is an avalanche of drug information to manage.
- Second, with 3.5 to 4 billion prescriptions written annually, there is too much paper to deal with.
- Third, the typical office deals with the details of 16 different health plans daily.
- Fourth, with all the growth in prescription activity, serious prescription errors are also increasingly common: handwriting problems, adverse drug interactions, and lack of dosage verification result in thousands of lost lives annually.

The latest e-prescribing tools can make your prescribing task much more manageable, while helping you and the pharmacy team prevent serious medication errors.

In short, e-prescribing is a true win-win solution.

2. How it Works
E-prescribing begins with the input of clinical information. Before you can begin submitting e-prescriptions, key fields of patient data will be pre-loaded from your current Practice Management or Electronic Medical Record system. For accessing the e-prescribing application, you can use either a PC computer or a smaller handheld device, whichever is a better fit for your practice routine and patient care approach.

The typical e-prescribing start-up package includes the following elements: a software program license, initial download of patient demographics, a handheld device, set-up of a wireless network, user training and support.

To write an e-prescription, you'll first look up a specific patient. In just minutes, the e-prescribing system interfaces with your decision support software, and simultaneously checks the patient's insurance eligibility and copayments, reviews the patient's medication history, reviews plan-specific drug formularies, checks for allergies and adverse drug-to-drug interactions before writing the prescription; and then electronically transmits the e-script to the patient's favorite pharmacy.

After the appointment, your patient can go directly to the pharmacy to pick up their medicine. The average pharmacy lead time from script transmission is less than 10 minutes, a significant improvement over hand-delivery and traditional processing of paper prescription notes. Shouldn't you and all your patients experience the convenience of e-prescriptions?

www.bcbsil.com/provider/eprescribing.htm
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3. Advantages
Electronic prescribing benefits the parties involved in the prescription drug delivery process. The three main advantages of e-prescribing are Safety, Efficiency and Affordability, while each party enjoys additional benefits specific to their particular role.

For Providers, e-prescribing increases mobility, convenience, and efficiency, through improved access to the patient’s prescription drug history, allergy and drug interaction alerts, and access to plan-specific formulary information, as well as prior authorization forms. The more consistently you use your e-prescribing tool, the more benefits you can expect to gain from it. For example, higher utilization of generic drug options is made easy by prompts within the program. A significant decrease in daily pharmacy calls is typical, thanks to improved clarity of prescription information transmitted directly to the pharmacy system. And in the event of a drug recall, the reporting capabilities included in the e-prescribing program allow you to quickly identify those patients who need to be notified.

For Patients, e-prescribing first and foremost increases drug safety and consumer confidence in health care services by reducing the likelihood of medication errors and misinterpretations. Other major benefits for patients are shorter waiting times at the pharmacy, reduced out-of-pocket costs, and more predictable drug copayments - all of which contribute to improved medication compliance and ultimately, better health outcomes.

For Pharmacies, e-prescribing eliminates the majority of callbacks to physicians for changes or clarification. Receiving the prescription information directly into the pharmacy computer reduces errors due to misinterpretation or data entry mistakes; this both increases processing efficiencies and improves customer relationships, two key success drivers in the highly competitive retail pharmacy market.

For Health Care Plans and Employers, e-prescribing helps contain increasing pharmacy costs, improves formulary adherence and increases generic drug utilization by displaying cues in the program that inform the prescribing physician of alternatives to more expensive brand name drugs. Moreover, the system promotes improved Member/Employee health, and offers future opportunities for innovative disease management programs.

Overall, e-prescribing technology serves to create a more efficient health care system for everyone. The key players in the health care industry - from leading health insurance plans to Illinois providers and community stakeholders - are on board with e-prescribing, and a climate of collaboration exists.

Read further for more details on how you can join this important movement and start making the most of e-prescribing in your daily practice of medicine.

4. Implementation
Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois is committed to promoting the use of e-prescribing technology to improve medication safety and affordability. For example, the initial e-prescribing implementation for approximately 500 Illinois physicians is being funded by a Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois pilot program, launched in 2007.

For Illinois providers not yet using e-prescribing, the prognosis is very good: as the e-prescribing pilot feedback is analyzed and the program evolves beyond its initial scope, additional physicians will have the opportunity to collaborate with Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois.

For the latest updates on e-prescribing implementation, please visit us online: [www.bcbsil.com/provider/eprescribing.htm](http://www.bcbsil.com/provider/eprescribing.htm)

You might consider e-prescribing your new professional-grade power tool for patient care: mastering a short learning curve will deliver a great deal of daily convenience and process efficiencies. Why wait for future government mandates to get started?
5. Learn More!
There’s never been a better time to implement an e-prescription system in your medical practice. The technology is robust, user-friendly, and compatible with thousands of dispensing pharmacies.

While some progressive health care providers have already implemented either fully Electronic Medical Records, or e-prescribing, or both, most physicians in Illinois still have neither in place. Government leaders both in Illinois and nationally are already calling for mandatory e-prescribing for all Medicare patients, as a tangible way to start modernizing the ailing U.S. health care system. So it is just a matter of time before hand-written prescriptions will become a thing of the past.

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois invites you to take a step today towards tomorrow’s best practices, by helping you become more familiar with e-prescribing. It is part of our commitment to empower our members, partners and communities to Experience. Wellness. Everywhere.

To learn more about upcoming e-prescribing initiatives for Illinois physicians, e-mail us at:

ilerx@bcbsil.com

6. Resources
BCBSIL e-Rx Web page:
http://www.bcbsil.com/provider/eprescribing.htm


Illinois Governor’s Executive Order on Electronic Prescribing:
http://www.illinois.gov/PressReleases/ShowPressRelease.cfm?SubjectID=3&RecNum=5068

7. Frequently Asked Questions
Q: What is Electronic Prescribing?
A: Electronic Prescribing is an efficient, economical and secure way to improve prescription accuracy and patient safety.

Q: What is the collaborative?
A: “The Illinois Collaborative is an informal multi-payor and statewide health care industry initiative with the goal of improving patient safety through e-prescribing technology”. The Illinois e-Prescribing Collaborative is the first of its kind in the nation, as insurers, technology vendors, pharmacies, employer groups, physicians and other organizations involved in the prescription process are working together to increase the use of e-prescribing.

Q: What organizations make up the collaborative?
A: Organizations involved in this collaborative include:

• American Academy of Pediatrics
• DrFirst.com
• Illinois Academy of Family Physicians
• Illinois Foundation for Quality Healthcare
• Illinois Healthcare and Family Services
• Illinois Hospital Association
• Illinois State Medical Society
• Midwest Business Group on Health
• RX HUB
• Safeway
• Supervalu
• SureScripts
• Walgreens
• ZixCorp
• Other Payors

Q: Will more IPAs be selected to participate?
A: Yes in the very near future. If you would like the opportunity to join our waiting list for next deployments please send an email to ilerx@bcbsil.com.

Q: What vendors are involved?

Q: What costs are covered by BCBSIL?
A: BCBSIL sponsored the initial deployment costs as well a one year license to the e-prescribing software.

Q: What types of patient information can be accessed when you e-prescribe?
A: Physicians have access to real-time patient data, including:

• Medication history
• Eligibility and benefits
• Patient’s plan drug formulary information
• Clinical alerts and warnings