



Joint Communiqué

25 November 2020

National roll-out of electronic prescriptions now supporting South Australia

Over 800,000 original electronic prescriptions have already been generated by prescribers across Australia since May, and the national rollout of electronic prescriptions is now progressing to include South Australia. Electronic prescriptions provide improved convenience especially for telehealth consults and those patients self-isolating.

Electronic prescribing is being implemented in general practices and community pharmacies across the country. Successful implementation has already occurred across all of Victoria and metropolitan Sydney.

Medical and pharmacy clinical peak bodies, Adelaide and Country SA PHNs, and clinical software providers are working together with the Australian Department of Health and the Australian Digital Health Agency to support doctors and pharmacists in South Australia to enable electronic prescribing across the state. This new technology will provide a safer and more convenient supply of medicines for patients.

Medical and pharmacy clinical peak body collaboration includes:

- Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP)
- Australian Medical Association (AMA)
- Australian College of Rural and Remote Medicine (ACRRM)
- The Pharmacy Guild of Australia (Guild)
- Pharmaceutical Society of Australia (PSA)

We all need to work together to ensure a smooth introduction of electronic prescriptions. If you have made the preparations outlined below, you can and should commence electronic prescribing in South Australia, in consultation with your patients. The following steps will help your pharmacy or general practice get ready.

General practice and community pharmacy readiness

Step 1: Ensure your Healthcare Identifier Service and Prescription Delivery Service connections are up to date.

Step 2: Software activation - contact your software supplier and ask them to activate your electronic prescribing functionality.

Step 3: Communication between local community pharmacies and general practices is critical - this will ensure everyone is ready to write and dispense an electronic prescription (noting some pharmacies may require more time and resources to get their dispensing workflow ready).

Patients may experience a delay in accessing their medicines including having to return to general practice for a paper prescription if this step is not undertaken.

Step 4: Stay informed - attend webinars, listen to podcasts and education sessions and access resources available from the Australian Digital Health Agency, Department of Health, PHNs or your relevant professional member organisation to learn more about electronic prescribing and how it works.

General practices and community pharmacies in other areas of Australia are also being advised to prepare for a broader rollout by getting software ready and participating in training opportunities being provided by the Agency, peak bodies and software providers.

Schedule 8 and 4D medicines

All medicines, including Schedule 8 and 4D medicines, can be prescribed and dispensed through an electronic prescription providing patients with a safe and secure way of obtaining medicines remotely. Unlike a request for a Schedule 8 or 4D medicine using a digital image of a prescription via fax or email, the prescriber is not required to send an original hard copy of the prescription to the pharmacy - the electronic (paperless) prescription is the legal order to prescribe and supply.

Patient Choice

It is important to remember that electronic prescriptions are an alternative to paper. If the patient prefers to have their prescription provided by paper, then their local GP and community pharmacy will continue to support the patient's preference.

Resources

If any site requires support, please contact the Practice support teams at your local PHN:

- **Adelaide PHN sites:** practicesupport@adelaidephn.com.au
- **Country SA PHN sites:** support@countrysaphn.com.au

For more information about electronic prescribing and electronic prescriptions, see:

- **Department of Health:** www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/electronic-prescribing
- **Australian Digital Health Agency:** www.digitalhealth.gov.au/get-started-with-digital-health/electronic-prescriptions
- **Australian Digital Health Agency electronic prescription eLearning:** <https://training.digitalhealth.gov.au/>
- **Australian Digital Health Agency electronic prescription upcoming webinars:** www.digitalhealth.gov.au/news-and-events/events
- **Australian Digital Health Agency electronic prescription podcasts:** www.digitalhealth.gov.au/news-and-events/podcasts
- **SA Health Fact sheet on electronic prescribing for Health Professionals**
- **RACGP:** www.racgp.org.au/running-a-practice/technology/clinical-technology/electronic-prescribing
- **ACRRM:** www.acrrm.org.au/electronic-prescribing
- **Pharmaceutical Society of Australia:** <https://www.psa.org.au/ep/>
Electronic prescriptions support line: **1300 955 162** between 8.30am to 7.00pm AEST or emailing ep@psa.org.au
- **The Pharmacy Guild of Australia:** www.guild.org.au/guild-branches/nsw/guild-training-clinical/guild-clinical/electronic-prescriptions
- **Country SA PHN:** www.countrysaphn.com.au/healthprofessionals/pr-digitalhealth



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