

Arizona Ordered to Step Up E-Prescribing

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Governor Janet Napolitano has issued an [Executive Order \(PDF\)](#) to significantly increase patient safety through the use of e-prescribing in Arizona. It is estimated that patients in the United States suffer 1.5 million preventable adverse drug "events" every year because of mistakes with their medications. Costs associated with those errors are estimated to exceed \$4 billion annually.

"E-prescribing can reduce mistakes and the associated costs dramatically," said Governor Napolitano. "Arizona has been a leader in developing electronic health records and the means by which to exchange those records while still protecting personal privacy. This order will ensure that we stay on that cutting-edge of health care technology."

Currently, less than 3 percent of Arizona health care providers use any form of e-prescribing. Yet, by ordering and transmitting prescriptions electronically, providers can avoid the mistakes that often accompany hand-written prescriptions; allow providers to create systems that can catch potential drug interactions; and can help provide accurate patient data quickly, especially in the case of an emergency.

The Governor's Order also urges Arizona's executive branch agencies to develop awareness and use of consumer tools that assist in medication safety. One example is the Med Form, available at www.themedform.com.

In 2005, the Governor created Arizona's Health-e Connection to research, organize and implement a statewide e-health information system. In 2007, Arizona was awarded a \$12 million federal grant to enhance and expand that work. Arizona Health-e Connection, along with executive branch agencies, will play a leading role in coordinating the promotion of e-prescription capabilities in Arizona.

For more information about the Office of the Governor, please visit www.azgovernor.gov.