



June 20, 2008

## DEA To Propose Rule To Allow E-Rx of Controlled Substances



As early as next week, the Drug Enforcement Administration plans to announce a proposed rule that would allow electronic prescribing of medications classified as controlled substances, according to an individual familiar with the situation, the *Wall Street Journal* reports.

The rule likely will include security requirements to ensure the legitimacy of prescriptions for controlled substances, which account for about 10% to 13% of all U.S. prescriptions.

The rule would apply to "Schedule IV" medications -- such as the insomnia treatments Lunesta and Ambien, as well as the anti-anxiety medication Xanax -- and "Schedule V" medications, such as the pain treatment Lyrica. According to an individual familiar with the situation, the rule also would apply to "Schedule II" medications, the most restricted category, which includes the attention deficit hyperactivity disorder treatments Concerta, Adderall and Ritalin and the pain medication OxyContin.

The proposed rule would require a public comment period.

Fewer than 10% of U.S. physicians currently use e-prescribing. Doctors have been reluctant to invest in the technology because of costs and concerns about DEA restrictions.

However, the new rule, in conjunction with a Medicare bill that would tie reimbursements to physicians' use of e-prescribing, could lead to widespread adoption, the *Journal* reports (Fields/Wilde Mathews, *Wall Street Journal*, 6/20).

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The California HealthCare Foundation by The Advisory Board Company.