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NACDS Calls on Congress to Support E-prescribing

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Legislation and regulatory approval are needed to encourage widespread adoption

Alexandria, Va. – The National Association of Chain Drug Stores (NACDS) urged Congress to support policies that will promote and expedite the adoption of electronic prescribing. In a letter to all Members of the U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives, NACDS explained the importance of legislation and regulation that will facilitate this goal.

First, NACDS seeks Congressional support of the “Medicare Electronic Medication and Safety Protection (E-MEDS) Act of 2007” (S.2408 and H.R. 4296). This bipartisan bill provides physicians with financial incentives to transmit prescriptions to pharmacies electronically in the Medicare program. It also requires the use of e-prescribing in Medicare by 2011.

Second, to ensure broader adoption of e-prescribing by physicians, it is important that the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) and the Department of Justice (DOJ) allow this technology to be utilized for controlled substances, which make up nearly 20% of all prescriptions. Currently, DEA regulations prohibit the use of e-prescribing for controlled substances, effectively forcing physicians who e-prescribe to maintain two separate systems: an electronic system for noncontrolled substances and a paper system for controlled substances. This places a significant burden on physicians and has led many to forego electronic prescribing altogether.

“E-prescribing is a proven technology that will vastly improve health outcomes for individuals taking medications, reduce prescription errors and save money for public and private health care programs,” said NACDS President and CEO Steven C. Anderson, IOM, CAE. “We urge Congressional support in expediting widespread utilization of e-prescribing to enhance health providers’ access to important health care information to help benefit patients.”

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