

Pharmacies to Push E-Prescribing

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Ten major pharmacy chains are launching a national marketing campaign to raise consumer awareness about electronic prescriptions.

The chains, which along with participating independent pharmacies represent 26,000 stores, are sponsoring a new Web site for consumers, at LearnAboutEprescriptions.com. The site explains the technology and enables a consumer to enter a ZIP code to find physicians and pharmacies that support e-prescribing. Electronic prescription network vendor SureScripts, Alexandria, Va., also supports the site.

The pharmacies also will put signs on their doors and counters informing consumers that they fill electronic prescriptions. According to SureScripts, more than 70% of community pharmacies can receive electronic prescriptions but only 6% of physicians can send them.



Participating pharmacy chains include CVS, Duane Reade, Giant Food, Kerr Drug, Longs Drugs, Rite Aid, Stop & Shop, SUPERVALU Pharmacies (Acme, Albertsons, bigg's, Cub, Farm Fresh, Osco, Shop & Save, and Shoppers), Walgreens and Wal-Mart.

Supporters of the marketing campaign hope to build consumer awareness and encourage patients to ask their physicians to adopt the technology, a spokesperson says. Empowered consumers also could pressure Congress to pass legislation to encourage more e-prescribing, he adds.

The marketing campaign comes as physicians face a Jan. 1, 2009, mandate for all computer-generated prescriptions covered under the Medicare Part D program to be transmitted electronically and not via fax.

In a separate initiative in March, five physician organizations launched a Web site to help physicians adopt e-prescribing or enhance their use. The site also helps e-prescribing physicians determine if their software sends an electronic prescription or a computer-

generated fax to the selected pharmacy.

Sponsoring organizations are the American Academy of Family Physicians, American Academy of Pediatrics, American College of Cardiology, American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, and the Medical Group Management Association. The site is available at GetRxConnected.com.

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