



UNDERSTANDING AND EMBRACING THE ADVANTAGES OF USING ELECTRONIC PRESCRIPTIONS

New mandates are taking effect across the United States, but they're only one of the many good reasons to adopt e-prescriptions.

In 2011, fewer than 20% of physicians and dentists in the United States used electronic prescriptions in their practices¹. By 2016, that number had grown to more than 70%². And over the next five years, the global e-prescribing market is projected to grow from \$1.1 billion today to \$3.3 billion in 2025³.

What's fueling this remarkable growth? There is a fairly simple and obvious answer. A growing slate of new laws and regulations—many of which are just now taking full effect—mandate the use of e-prescriptions, which has accelerated adoption over the past few years. But that simple answer doesn't tell the whole story. The right e-prescribing solution also offers dental and medical practices a long list of important business and patient care benefits that go far beyond the short-term goal of meeting government and industry mandates.

Here are a few insights and suggestions to help guide both parts of your e-prescribing journey—from successfully navigating the changing legal and regulatory landscape to making the most of all the important benefits e-prescribing can offer your practice.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF E-PRESCRIBING

Technology companies have been offering e-prescription solutions since the late 1990's⁴, but widespread adoption didn't really take off until after the EMR Mandate Provision of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) became law in 2009. This landmark legislation provided financial incentives (and later penalties) to help drive and accelerate the movement toward electronic health and dental records. As these incentives started to take hold and show results, e-prescribing quickly became a logical and natural extension of modern electronic health record (EHR) and electronic dental record (EDR) systems.

In 2018, another sweeping new law was passed to help combat a growing nationwide opioid epidemic.

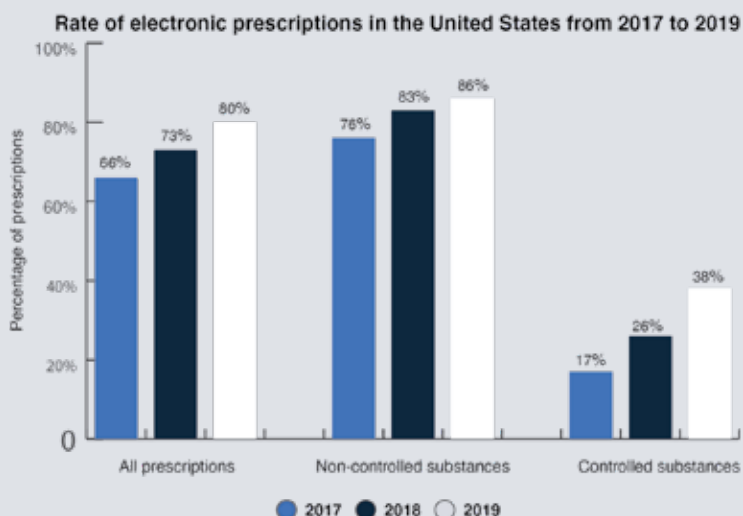
¹ https://www.ada.org/-/media/ADA/Science%20and%20Research/Files/ADA_White_Paper_No.-d-_1070.pdf?la=en

² <https://www.beckershospitalreview.com/healthcare-information-technology/25-things-to-know-about-e-prescribing.html>

³ <https://www.marketsandmarkets.com/Market-Reports/e-prescription-systems-market-910.html>

⁴ <https://www.covetus.com/blog/the-history-of-electronic-prescribing-erx-and-its-benefits-in-healthcare-tech>

Overall e-prescription rates grew rapidly from 2017 through 2019, although controlled e-prescriptions lagged significantly behind.



Source: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/864380/share-of-us-e-prescriptions/>

This legislation included a provision requiring that all prescriptions for controlled substances under Medicare Part D be transmitted electronically by 2021. States have followed suit with their own “electronic prescribing for controlled substances (EPCS)” mandates designed to help fight opioid abuse, and many of these state laws also focus on connecting e-prescribing systems to prescription drug monitoring programs (PDMPs).

Pharmacies have also played an important role in the growth of the e-prescribing market in recent years. From the very beginning, pharmacies recognized the cost-saving and efficiency-boosting potential of managing prescriptions electronically, and they have actively worked to build and refine technology systems to enable those efforts. By 2016, a full 90% of pharmacies in the United States accepted e-prescriptions from physicians and dentist⁶, and that number has continued to grow in the years since. Today, some of the largest nationwide pharmacies, including Walmart⁷, have even started requiring health and dental care providers to submit their prescriptions electronically.

Physicians and dentists have generally been more cautious about moving to e-prescriptions, although adoption has increased rapidly over the past three years. Between 2017 and 2019, the rate of e-prescriptions jumped from 66% to 80% for all prescriptions. However, adoption has been significantly slower for controlled substances. In 2017, only 17% of prescriptions for

E-PRESCRIBING BY THE NUMBERS

- › More than 90% of U.S. pharmacies currently accept e-prescriptions
- › E-prescription rates jumped from 66% to 80% between 2017 and 2019 for all medications
- › Only 38% of prescriptions for controlled substances were e-prescribed in 2019
- › 30 states have current or impending mandates in place requiring e-subscriptions for controlled substances⁵

controlled substances were issued electronically, and that number grew to a relatively modest 38% in 2019⁸. There are logical reasons for this disparity. Because controlled substances are more tightly regulated and restricted than other medications, they are also subject to more stringent e-prescribing security and authentication requirements. These additional requirements have obviously made it more challenging for medical and dental practices to use e-prescriptions for controlled substances—even long after many of them have started e-prescribing other types of medications.

NAVIGATING TODAY’S EVOLVING WORLD OF E-PRESCRIBING LAWS, MANDATES, AND REGULATIONS

Most of the recent federal and state laws and mandates related to e-prescribing focus on using electronic prescriptions—working in conjunction with EHRs, EDR’s, and electronic prescription drug monitoring programs (PDMPs)—to reduce prescription opioid abuse. These requirements vary significantly from state to state, but there are some important common attributes and best practices you can use to prepare your practice for e-prescribing mandates in your area.

BECOME FAMILIAR WITH MEDICARE PART D E-PRESCRIBING REQUIREMENTS

On October 28, 2018, the “SUPPORT for Patients and Communities Act” was signed into law, which

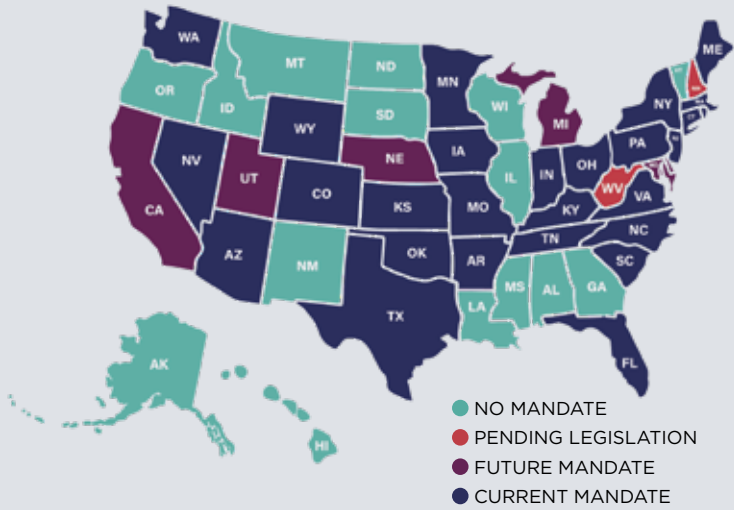
⁵ <https://mdtoolbox.com/eprescribe-map.aspx?AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1>

⁶ Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality

⁷ <https://corporate.walmart.com/newsroom/2018/05/07/walmart-introduces-additional-measures-to-help-curb-opioid-abuse-and-misuse>

⁸ <https://www.statista.com/statistics/864380/share-of-us-e-prescriptions/>

Between now and the end of 2022, EPCS mandates will take effect in 30 states.



included a provision requiring all prescriptions for controlled substances covered under Medicare Part D to be transmitted electronically starting on January 1, 2021. In addition, providers also have to register with and receive an ID number from the DEA and use two-factor authentication tokens for all controlled substance prescriptions⁹.

Although many of these new rules don't apply directly to dental practices, they are changing the e-prescribing landscape, influencing other state and industry policies, and accelerating overall e-prescription adoption for controlled substances across the board.

For example, most states require the same type of prescriber validation and two-factor signature authentication for controlled substance e-prescriptions as the federal mandate. As a result, it's helpful to understand the basics and keep the latest federal developments on your radar as you plan your e-prescribing approach.

STAY ON TOP OF LOCAL “ELECTRONIC PRESCRIBING FOR CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES” (EPCS) MANDATES

As new federal e-prescribing rules have taken hold, many states have developed and implemented their own “electronic prescribing for controlled substances” (EPCS) requirements. Although these state-level initiatives share some characteristics, there are important differences and variations, including when they take effect. Twelve states already had active EPCS mandates in place prior to January 1, 2021. Twelve more states’ EPCS mandates went live on January 1, 2021. And six states’ requirements will become active

DENTRIXENTERPRISE.COM/EPRESCRIBE

later in 2021 and throughout 2022. In some cases, e-prescribing mandates only affect prescriptions for controlled substances; in others, they apply to all prescriptions¹⁰. Regardless, if you live in one of the 30 states with existing or impending EPCS mandates, you should already have an e-subscribing plan or solution in place. If you live in one of the 20 states without an EPCS mandate on the books, it's important to start preparing now, since momentum is clearly shifting toward a future where virtually all prescriptions—especially those for controlled substances—will be issued and managed electronically.

**MAKE PRESCRIPTION DRUG MONITORING
PROGRAMS (PDMPs) PART OF YOUR
E-SUBSCRIBING SOLUTION**

The American Dental Association already recommends that dental practices use a prescription drug monitoring program (PDMP) when they prescribe opioids for acute pain management¹². These programs are typically administered at the state level, and they are designed to help identify prescription drug abuse across different healthcare providers to help them make more informed decisions. As more EPCS requirements become active, some states are also making participation in PDMPs mandatory. Given the valuable role these programs can play in the prescription process—and the increasing pressure to use them—many practices are looking to make PDMPs a more fully integrated part of their e-prescribing solutions and workflows. This approach allows them to make better, more informed decisions when they prescribe controlled substances, but it also puts them in the best possible position if or when PDMP participation becomes a requirement in their state.

**SEE BEYOND THE MANDATES TO EMBRACE
ALL THE BENEFITS OF E-PRESCRIBING**

The prospect of current or future government mandates and industry pressure provides a valid, compelling, and often unavoidable reason to implement an e-prescribing solution in your practice. But even

9 <https://www.cbo.gov/publication/53967>

10 <https://mdtoolbox.com/eprescribe-map.aspx?AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1>

CHARACTERISTICS AND CAPABILITIES TO LOOK FOR IN YOUR E-PRESCRIBING SOLUTION

- Strong, built-in privacy and security capabilities, including prescriber authentication and two-factor signature authentication, that meet federal and state legal requirements for e-prescribing controlled substances
- Automatic cross-provider checks for potential drug allergies, interactions, duplicate treatments, and other safety issues
- Integration with local prescription drug monitoring programs to enable better, more informed prescription decisions—especially for opioids and other controlled substances
- Integration with your practice management solution to streamline and simplify prescription management and renewals.
- Easy access to patients' prescription benefit eligibility to find preferred drugs and keep out-of-pocket costs low
- Fast, easy implementation with a modern solution that doesn't require big investments in hardware, software, or ongoing maintenance

without those requirements, e-prescribing solutions have reached the point where they can offer you undeniable business and patient care benefits. With the right kind of e-prescribing solution in place, you can:

- Improve patient safety by automatically checking for allergies, past drug interactions, dosage errors, and other factors that can slip through the cracks with paper prescriptions. One study found that prescription error rates decreased with e-prescriptions from 42.5 errors per 100 prescriptions to 6.6 errors per 200 prescriptions¹¹.
- Provide better patient experiences by automatically transferring prescriptions directly to retail and mail-order pharmacies. This reduces waiting times for patients, eliminates dosage errors, and makes it easier and more convenient for them to pick up their prescriptions.
- Increase efficiency with a system that streamlines and automates many aspects of the prescription management process, so your staff spends less time clarifying authorization and refill questions or correcting mistakes.

¹¹ <https://perspectives.ahima.org/electronic-prescribing-improving-the-efficiency-and-accuracy-of-prescribing-in-the-ambulatory-care-setting-2/#.VwQWckfyqUk>

These benefits are near the top of the priority list for nearly any dental practice, and unlike earlier e-prescribing solutions that required significant hardware, software, and maintenance investments, many of today's e-prescribing solutions are subscription based. That means you can quickly tap into all the advantages of a complete e-prescribing solution with no upfront costs, a fast and relatively simple deployment, and a minimal learning curve—all for a predictable monthly cost.

Our e-prescribing solution should also offer full integration with your practice management solution, so you can make prescriptions a natural, seamless part of your larger patient and business workflows. And it should allow you to connect with and take advantage of the prescription drug monitoring program in your state, so you can meet local requirements and play an active role in fighting prescription opioid abuse.

START YOUR E-PRESCRIBING FUTURE TODAY

Whether you're exploring e-prescribing for the first time—or looking to modernize your existing solution—Dentrix Enterprise ePrescribe can offer your practices an e-prescribing solution that:

- Meets all of the latest federal and state EPCS mandates
- Makes prescription drug monitoring programs a natural part of your e-prescribing workflow
- Improves patient safety and care as well as makes your practices more efficient



CALL 800.459.8067

Or visit **Dentrix.com/ePrescribe** to learn how Dentrix Enterprise ePrescribe can benefit your practices.

Certain components of the products may be provided by third parties. Henry Schein One, LLC, and its affiliates are not responsible for, and expressly disclaim, all liability for damages of any kind arising out of the use of those third-party products or services.

PA-DTXE-EPRESCR-0308

Henry Schein One delivers **connected dental software and services with expert business coaching** to **help practices improve every aspect of practice management and grow profits.**

