MEDIA RELEASE

24 May 2010

eRx ensures all e-scripts at no cost to pharmacy

Dispensing of electronic scripts will be effectively free for all pharmacies as a result of a new pricing policy announced by eRx Script Exchange today. The new policy includes two major changes. eRx will lower its transaction fee to match the 15c incentive payment under the Fifth Community Pharmacy Agreement. eRx will also exchange all electronic scripts not currently funded by the incentive scheme at no cost. This includes private and pharmacy initiated originals and repeats therefore ensuring that pharmacies are not out-of-pocket for using e-scripts.

According to Graham Cunningham, Chairman, eRx Script Exchange, the policy is motivated by a commitment to maintaining a straightforward and cost-neutral approach for users. "We believe that this is a vital step in providing an e-script service that is both comprehensive and easy to understand, but also in removing any cost concerns about e-scripts."

"Whilst the announcement of incentive payments is extremely positive for patient care and for the future of e-health in Australia, we would prefer an approach that includes all prescriptions. As it stands, the selective nature of this incentive could lead to confusion and lower the future benefits of e-scripts such as contributing complete patient medication history to the newly announced government Electronic Health Record. Our new pricing policy allows us to continue discussions on these outstanding issues while we implement eRx fully across Australia for all prescriptions."

Mr Cunningham advised that eRx may not be able maintain its cost-neutral approach indefinitely but it will continue to work with partners, government and the industry in an attempt to do so. If the pricing policy needs to be changed, eRx users will be provided with a minimum of two months' notification in advance.

More than 3,700 doctors and 2,000 pharmacies are already using eRx for electronic prescribing and dispensing, and more than 8.5 million scripts have been safely, securely, and accurately completed via eRx since launch in April 2009. eRx remains cost free to doctors and while the incentive payments to pharmacy are due to begin on 1 July, eRx is available to Guild and AFSPA members for no cost today.

To register for eRx, or to find out more about the incentive payments and eRx's cost-neutral pricing policy, visit www.erx.com.au.

Media enquiries
David Freemantle
Project Director, eRx Script Exchange
0417 398 726