One billion eRx electronic scripts dispensed and counting

Australia achieved a major milestone in patient safety today, reaching one billion prescriptions dispensed electronically through eRx. Electronic transfer of prescriptions improves patient safety by increasing confidence that the correct medications are being dispensed whilst also making dispensing faster.

Electronic prescribing brings important safety gains as a result of the fact that prescription information, including patient and medication data, can be shared safely and securely between GPs and pharmacists. As a result, pharmacists no longer have to re-type medications or patient information, which makes dispensing faster whilst also increasing GP confidence that the correct medications are being dispensed.

The one billion electronic scripts have been dispensed via eRx Script Exchange, Australia's first and largest national prescriptions exchange. Since its launch in 2009, 89% (4,714) of Australia's pharmacies and 76% (19,930) of Australia's GPs have connected to and are using the exchange.

According to Paul Naismith, pharmacist and CEO of Fred IT Group, "Exceeding one billion electronic dispensing records is real cause for celebration for Australian patients, their doctors and pharmacists. Electronic prescribing and dispensing are two of the most fundamental ways of adding efficiencies in the medication supply process whilst also improving safeguards against potential dispensing issues. Pharmacy customers are the winners here as a result of having had one billion scripts dispensed with a greater guarantee of safety."

"The achievement of creating an Australia-wide electronic script network is a direct result of the significant support behind the scenes. This has included cooperation across pharmacy and medical professions, industry groups, IT companies and government. The majority of pharmacies have also told us that funding support, such as the recent continuation of electronic script funding under the 6th Community Pharmacy Agreement, is critical for the ongoing success of electronic prescribing."

In our 2015 eRx survey of pharmacists:

- 74% of pharmacies said that government funding under the 5th Community Pharmacy Agreement was very important to their ongoing use of electronic scripts
- 74% of pharmacists also told us that they find eRx extremely valuable
- 46% said that dispensing efficiency was the major motivation for using eRx

Mr Naismith said, "We are firmly focused on improving and building on the achievement that is already in place. This means connecting more doctors and pharmacies, and continuing to identify ways to further improve eHealth connectivity so that doctors and pharmacists are able to experience the benefits of real-time medications histories, better medicines management and real-time communication with other professionals in their day to day work."

The volume of electronic prescriptions and dispenses has increased exponentially since launch. By July 2015, pharmacies using eRx were electronically dispensing:

- 753,000 electronic prescriptions each day
- 5.2 million each week
- 22.5 million per month
- During peak periods, 25 electronic scripts are dispensed per second.

Refer to the attached for more details of dispensing and prescribing patterns.

eRx is delivered in collaboration with 24 of Australia's leading medical and pharmacy software vendors. A further eleven are in the process of integrating and certifying with the network.

About eRx Script Exchange:

eRx Script Exchange is Australia's largest and most clinically significant health information exchange. Electronic transfer of prescriptions (ETP) improves health outcomes through a safer, more efficient dispensing process. eRx is part of the Fred IT Group, Australia's largest provider of IT solutions to pharmacy. Fred and eRx have a deep commitment to the pursuit of technological leadership and innovation that make it easier and more efficient for pharmacies to run their business and optimise time spent helping patients.

eRx is a collaboration with every major medical and pharmacy software vendor in Australia. Our certified medical vendor partners include Medical Director, Best Practice, Communicare, Zedmed, Medtech, Houston, Genie, CSC (Practix), Stat Health, GPComplete, Intrahealth, Visual Outcomes, SmartClinics, HTR Telehealth, and TotalCare. Certified pharmacy vendors include Fred Dispense, Fred NXT, Simple Retail, minfos, Pharmasol/LOTS, Amfac, Pharmacy Pro, MountainTop Dispense and Z Software. More than 19,930 doctors and 4,714 pharmacies around Australia are already using eRx.

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