Electronic transfer of prescriptions fact sheet

Electronic transfer of prescriptions (ETP) is the safe and secure exchange of prescriptions between prescribing and dispensing systems. ETP starts when a clinician prints a prescription from their clinical software which then sends a copy of the information on the prescription to a repository called the Prescription Delivery Service (PDS). When the patient presents their paper prescription to the pharmacist, the barcode is scanned and the information is sent directly to the pharmacy dispensing system from the PDS without the need to re-enter the information.
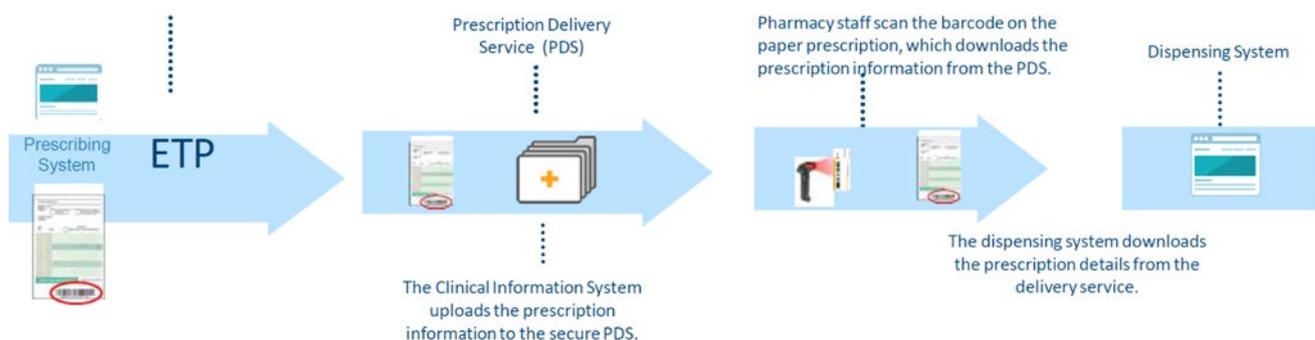
How do ETP and the PDS work?

The electronic copy of the prescription is held securely in the PDS. When a paper prescription is presented to an ETP-enabled pharmacy, the barcode will be scanned allowing the dispensing system to automatically download and decrypt the prescription information from the PDS. This information is then used to automatically populate the pharmacy dispensing system including patient name, concession, Medicare and the statutory prescription information.

There are currently two pharmacy dispensing systems available — eRx Script Exchange and MediSecure. Each PDS has been approved by the Commonwealth and is required to meet specified standards relating to security and privacy. A pharmacy or medical practice may be connected to one or both PDS systems.

Both systems are interoperable, meaning that prescription information sent by one PDS can be retrieved by a pharmacy connected to the other PDS.

Please note: Some clinical software systems may not be compatible with all of the pharmacy dispensing systems; you can check requirements before registering with a PDS.

It is a requirement for General Practices who claim the eHealth Practice Incentive Payment (ePIP) to have ETP enabled.

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Requirements for ETP:

- Prescribing and dispensing software that is capable of sending ETP (most software in Australia is capable; if you are unsure check with your vendor).
- Security and authentication keys must be correctly installed and operating in the software. This will ensure the prescription is securely encrypted before it leaves the prescribing clinical software and the organisation is identified as the sender.
- The prescribing and dispensing organisations must have a Healthcare Provider Identifier – Organisation (HPI-O) and this must be recorded in the prescribing and dispensing software.
- Individual healthcare providers participating in ETP must have a Healthcare Provider Identifier – Individual (HPI-I) and this must be recorded in the prescribing and dispensing software.
- Participating organisations must be connected to the Healthcare Identifier (HI) service.
- The healthcare organisation must register with either or both PDS and also register each individual healthcare provider with the PDS.
- Clinical software must be configured for ETP. *Tip – Prescribers will know if they are ETP-enabled if their prescriptions print with a barcode.*

Register with eRX

Register with Medisecure

Benefits of ETP:

- Improved confidentiality, quality and efficiency of the prescribing and dispensing process
- Security of medication information
- Increased clarity and communication of prescription information between the prescriber and dispenser
- Rapid information exchange
- Potential reduction in medication and dispensing errors
- Potential decline in adverse drug events
- Time and workflow efficiencies for pharmacy staff as there is no need to re-enter information
- Enables upload of prescription and dispensing records to the My Health Record
- Supports the technical requirements for electronic prescriptions.

Please note: If the pharmacy does not use ETP, the prescription is dispensed as per the standard dispensing process. That is, the prescription information is manually transcribed into the pharmacy's dispensing system and the medicine dispensed.

For More information:

eRx Script Exchange - Phone: 1300 700 921   Email: support@erx.com.au

MediSecure - Phone: 1800 472 747   Email: helpdesk@medisecure.com.au