E-Prescribing FAQ

For Independent Pharmacies

Table of Contents

- How do I work with my pharmacy management system vendor to enable my pharmacy for e-prescribing via the Surescripts network?
- Why should I report issues directly through my pharmacy management system vendor and not Surescripts?
- I am receiving duplicate prescriptions and do not believe I should be charged for them. How can I request a refund?
- What specific transactions can I conduct electronically via the Surescripts network using my pharmacy computer?
- How do I update my pharmacy name, address, telephone or fax number in the Surescripts system?
- Local prescribers are stating they cannot find my pharmacy in order to send e-prescriptions to us. I know I participate in e-prescribing. What is causing this and how do I resolve it?
- When I attempt to transmit a refill renewal request to a prescriber I receive the error message: “Receiving partner does not support this message type.” How can this issue be resolved?
- What do I do if I receive poor quality or miswritten electronic prescriptions?
- Where can I get updates on electronic prescriptions for controlled substances (EPCS)?
- What do I do if I want to send a message to the prescriber requesting authorization to make a change in the patient’s prescription?
- Is there any notification that the prescriber can send if they want to cancel a patient’s prescription electronically?
- What is Surescripts doing to improve the quality of e-prescriptions?
- What does Surescripts charge for e-prescribing?

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E-Prescribing FAQ
For Independent Pharmacies

How do I work with my pharmacy management system vendor to enable my pharmacy for e-prescribing via the Surescripts network?

If your pharmacy management system vendor is certified to connect to the Surescripts network, you simply contact your pharmacy management system vendor, ask them to enable your e-prescribing functionality, and specify that you want to be connected to the Surescripts network.

Pharmacies should ask their vendor:

- If any patches or upgrades to their system are required.
- If any amendments to their contract are needed to cover transaction fees
- What training is provided to get accustomed to the new or upgraded system

Surescripts operates the largest health information network in the country, connecting a diverse community of pharmacies, providers, benefit managers, and health information exchanges. However, the software you are using at your pharmacy for e-prescribing is specific to your pharmacy management system – not Surescripts. All prescriptions to or from your pharmacy are routed through your pharmacy management system vendor. Therefore, your vendor should research any issues occurring at the pharmacy or vendor level prior to Surescripts getting involved. If your vendor cannot identify and remedy the issue on their own, they will reach out to Surescripts on your behalf to report the issue. At the time the issue is resolved, Surescripts will notify your vendor. Your pharmacy management system vendor should follow-up with you, as their pharmacy customer.

Why should I report issues directly through my pharmacy management system vendor and not Surescripts?

I am receiving duplicate prescriptions and do not believe I should be charged for them. How can I request a refund?

If you believe you have received inappropriate duplicate messages, you will need to contact your pharmacy management system vendor to determine their policy as to how to report this issue and request a refund. Most vendors require documentation, so please be prepared to provide information on the specific occurrences of these duplicate messages for any research and/or reporting to take place. Surescripts will work with your vendor on this issue. Any potential refunds to your pharmacy will be provided directly from your vendor – not Surescripts.

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What specific transactions can I conduct electronically via the Surescripts network using my pharmacy computer?

How do I update my pharmacy name, address, telephone or fax number in the Surescripts system?

Local prescribers are stating they cannot find my pharmacy in order to send e-prescriptions to us. I know I participate in e-prescribing. What is causing this and how do I resolve it?

Your connection to the Surescripts network enables you to:

- Receive a new prescription directly into your pharmacy computer system
- Send a request to a prescriber for prescription refill renewals
- Receive a renewal approval or denial response from a prescriber.
- If your software supports the following features, allow your pharmacy to receive a Cancel Prescription Request from a prescriber and send a Prescription Change Request to a prescriber. (Note: The software that local prescribers use must also be enabled to send and/or receive these transactions in order for such communications to work.)
- Process e-prescriptions for controlled substances (EPCS), helping to reduce fraud and abuse.

Surescripts directory is maintained by your pharmacy management system vendor. You will need to contact your pharmacy management system vendor directly to have any necessary updates applied. If your vendor requires any assistance in applying the updates, they will log a ticket with Surescripts on your behalf for resolution.

Most of the time this means the prescriber’s pharmacy directory is out of date. First, you will need to verify that your pharmacy does in fact participate in e-prescribing. E-prescribing is a computer-to-computer communication. If your pharmacy does participate and the prescriber cannot find your pharmacy in their system, this indicates an issue between the prescriber and their specific e-prescribing/EMR vendor, which should be providing them with accurate and up-to-date pharmacy directory information. There are a couple of things you can do to assist the prescriber to see that their pharmacy directory is updated:

1. Communicate to the prescriber that they must work with their vendor to update their pharmacy directory, and ask the prescriber to make sure they know the proper process between them and their vendor to maintain their pharmacy directory in the future.
When I attempt to transmit a refill renewal request to a prescriber I receive the error message: “Receiving partner does not support this message type.” How can this issue be resolved?

2. Provide the prescriber with your NCPDP/NABP number. This is the number that must be loaded into the prescriber’s e-prescribing application in order for a prescription to be transmitted to your pharmacy via the Surescripts network. Some vendors allow prescribers to manually add a missing pharmacy using the corresponding NCPDP/NABP number.

3. Surescripts maintains a site for prescribers where they can search for and locate all e-prescribing pharmacies and their corresponding NCPDP/NABP numbers. Prescribers should visit www.surescripts.com/NCPDP to access this information to assist them in maintaining pharmacy directories. Make sure you have your DEA, NPI, or SPI provider ID numbers handy in order to use the site.

4. Contact your pharmacy management system vendor to report this issue. They will open a support ticket on your behalf so the issue can be researched. This indicates that the prescriber you are attempting to send to does not accept refill renewal requests. They only have the ability to transmit new prescriptions to pharmacies. This could also be caused by attempting to transmit a refill renewal request to an outdated Surescripts Provider ID (SPI) number. Your pharmacy management system vendor is responsible for providing you with the necessary tools and training to maintain your prescriber directory, thereby allowing you to differentiate prescribers that accept electronic refill renewal requests from those that do not. If you think you have inaccurate information in your directories, please contact your vendor.

Furthermore, Surescripts also maintains a list of e-prescribing enabled physicians and their corresponding SPI information for those that accept refill renewal requests at www.surescripts.com/SPI. This is a supplemental resource you can utilize along with the tools provided by your vendor to assist in maintaining your prescriber directory.

Note: When viewing the report on the Surescripts website, those prescribers that do not accept refill renewal requests are listed at the bottom of the report by name only. The pharmacy does not need the prescriber’s SPI number loaded into their system to receive new prescriptions from such prescribers. The SPI is only needed to transmit refill renewal requests electronically.
Where can I get updates on electronic prescriptions for controlled substances (EPCS)?:

Contact your pharmacy management system vendor with examples of poor quality or miswritten electronic prescriptions. All electronic prescriptions that your pharmacy receives are routed through your pharmacy management system vendor; research will be conducted as to how these messages were transmitted and received. Once the information is compiled by the pharmacy management system vendor, if Surescripts involvement is necessary, a case will be routed directly to Surescripts Support.

Virtually all requirements on pharmacy applications for EPCS must be handled by your pharmacy management system vendor. Pharmacies must apply updates to their software systems to ensure DEA and Surescripts NCPDP SCRIPT adherence for EPCS.

EPCS has many benefits, including reduced fraud and abuse, a secure electronic record of the transaction, and improved safety and patient care. EPCS is now legal in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. To learn more about EPCS and its adoption on a state-by-state basis, visit www.surescripts.com/epcs.

Surescripts has enabled a new message type called a Prescription Change Request that allows a pharmacy to send a message electronically to a prescriber to request authorization to make a change to a prescription. This is a feature that is part of a new version of the electronic prescribing standard created by the National Council for Prescription Drug Programs (NCPDP). Please contact your pharmacy management system vendor to determine if your system has been updated to NCPDP SCRIPT Version 10.6 and ask if your software supports the Prescription Change Request transaction. (Note: The software that local prescribers use must also be enabled to receive such transactions in order for such communications to be available.)

What do I do if I receive poor quality or miswritten electronic prescriptions?

What do I do if I want to send a message to the prescriber requesting authorization to make a change in the patient’s prescription?
Surescripts has enabled a new message type called a Cancel Prescription Request, which allows a prescriber to send a message electronically to a pharmacy to cancel a previously prescribed medication. This feature is part of a new version of the electronic prescribing standard created by NCPDP. You should check with your pharmacy management system vendor to see if your system is capable of receiving and processing cancel transactions. (Note: The software that local prescribers use must also be enabled to transmit these transactions in order for such communications to be available.)

Our quality programs promote proven Best Practices to prescribers, health systems and IDNs, and EHR vendors as a way to communicate the benefits of continuous quality improvement for e-prescribing. Surescripts has identified some key areas that are specifically targeted to improve the quality of e-prescriptions and eliminate:

- Conflicting information between the notes field and directions field
- Poorly-formatted drug descriptions
- Conflicts between written date and transmission date
- Confusing or non-specific quantity qualifiers

Surescripts’ White Coat of Quality program works with standalone and EHR vendors to address these issues and recognizes those vendors who improve performance. For more information on Surescripts Quality efforts please contact Quality@Surescripts.com.

Surescripts charges a transaction fee to pharmacy vendors for each e-prescribing message traversing its network. Pharmacy management system vendors in turn determine what to charge their pharmacy customers for the service. Surescripts does not set the price or billing structure charged by the vendor to their pharmacy customers. Surescripts charges vendors for the following transactions: new prescriptions, refill renewal responses, and two optional transactions—prescription change requests and cancel prescription requests.