The Impact of Electronic Prescribing of Controlled Substances on Meaningful Use

As Meaningful Use (MU) requirements for e-prescribing become more stringent and the volume of controlled substance prescriptions continue to rise, implementing electronic prescribing of controlled substances (EPCS) is becoming more critical for organizations to meet MU Stage 2 requirements.

**Key Points:**

- To meet MU Stage 2, providers must process over 50% of prescriptions electronically.
- 40% of patients that receive a prescription are likely to be given a mix of controlled and non-controlled substances.
- Adopting EPCS enables one e-prescribing workflow for all prescriptions and will help providers achieve MU requirements.

**Enabling EPCS can increase e-prescribing utilization rates by eliminating dual workflows**

Electronic prescribing is a core measure of Meaningful Use (MU). In Stage 2, eligible providers must process more than 50 percent of prescriptions electronically using a certified electronic health record (EHR) program. Because the MU criteria was established prior to the DEA’s interim final rule allowing EPCS, including controlled substances in the e-prescribing calculation is optional, but not required. However, the increased volume of controlled substance prescriptions may make it difficult to achieve the 50 percent e-prescribing threshold for non-controlled substances without implementing EPCS.

Here’s why. Controlled substances have increased from about 10 percent of all prescriptions in 2010 to a projected 30 percent in 2015. In fact, about 40% of all patients are likely to have a mix of controlled and non-controlled substances. The majority of controlled substances are prescribed in conjunction with non-controlled substances, so without EPCS, this increase in volume exacerbates the challenges of dual prescribing workflows: e-prescribing for non-controlled substances and printed, paper prescribing for schedule II-V controlled substances.
To eliminate confusion for patients, prescribers often default to a single, paper-based workflow when prescribing a mix of controlled and non-controlled substances for patients, decreasing e-prescribing utilization rates. The table below illustrates that if providers default to a paper-based workflow for all mixed prescriptions they would need to e-prescribe 93% of the non-controlled only prescriptions to meet the MU stage 2 utilization measure. By enabling EPCS, providers can e-prescribe all prescriptions, providing a consistent workflow experience for both prescribers and patients. One workflow means improved e-prescribing ratios, which makes it easier to obtain the MU stage 2 threshold of 50 percent.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>The % of non-controlled prescriptions e-prescribed when being prescribed with a controlled substance</th>
<th>% of non-controlled prescriptions e-prescribed when prescribed with no controlled substances</th>
<th>e-prescribing Utilization Measure</th>
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<tr>
<td>0%</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>50%</td>
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**EPCS can help providers and patients cope with the reclassification of hydrocodone combination drugs**

A major contributing factor to the increase in controlled substance prescriptions is the reclassification of hydrocodone combination drugs to Schedule II controlled substances. In an effort to curb substance abuse, the DEA’s ruling placed tighter controls (allowing no faxing, verbal orders, or refills) on a large number of popular medications, including Vicodin, which is the most prescribed medication in the United States with over 136 million prescriptions written in 2013. This reclassification will increase the number of prescriptions written for controlled substances by as much as 25 percent or more, contributing significantly to the challenge of dual prescribing workflows. By enabling EPCS, providers have one, efficient e-prescribing workflow for all prescriptions, making it easier for patients and prescribers while also helping organizations reach MU guidelines and preserve CMS reimbursements.
Enabling EPCS securely with Imprivata Confirm ID

The DEA allows EPCS only if certain requirements are met and a secure, auditable chain of trust is established for the entire EPCS process. Imprivata Confirm ID™ is the fast, secure signing solution for e-prescribing of controlled substances. Imprivata Confirm ID enables a major shift to electronic prescribing of controlled substances (EPCS) by delivering the first comprehensive product that simplifies adoption of regulatory requirements for EPCS while helping providers address inefficiencies and potential fraud caused by paper based prescriptions. The solution creates a secure chain of trust by simplifying provider identity proofing, enabling supervised enrollment, and enforcing two factor authentication requirements while maintaining a comprehensive audit trail throughout the entire process.

Imprivata Confirm ID elegantly simplifies EPCS workflows by:

- Integrating directly into the e-prescribing workflows of leading EMR applications
- Supporting DEA compliant fingerprint biometrics and tokens, providing must-have flexibility for all clinical workflows
- Automating authentication modality presentation – clinician is only prompted for what is available and allowed
- Operating in any SSO environment as a stand-alone solution

Imprivata Confirm ID enables a major shift to electronic prescribing of controlled substances (EPCS) by delivering the first comprehensive product that simplifies adoption of regulatory requirements for EPCS.

Imprivata Confirm ID: Fast, Secure Signing for E-prescribing of Controlled Substances

For more information about Imprivata Confirm ID and how it helps meet DEA and state-level compliance requirements for EPCS, visit [www.imprivata.com/EPCS](http://www.imprivata.com/EPCS).
About Imprivata

Imprivata (NYSE: IMPR), the healthcare IT security company, is a leading provider of authentication and access management solutions for the healthcare industry. Imprivata offers single sign-on, authentication management and secure communications solutions that enable fast, secure and more efficient access to healthcare information technology systems. Imprivata solutions address multiple security challenges and improve provider productivity for better focus on patient experience.

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