Australian Government
Australian Digital Health Agency

National Requirements for Electronic Prescriptions

29 September 2017 v1.0
Approved for external use
Document ID: DH-2625:2017

Objectives

The objectives of the national requirements for electronic prescriptions are:

- **Security and integrity**
  The software issuing electronic prescriptions will only allow authorised persons to generate electronic prescriptions for all medicines.
- **Availability**
  Electronic prescriptions will be able to be dispensed in any pharmacy or other authorised place, irrespective of which authorised prescriber issued the prescription and which state or territory it was issued in (subject to regulatory constraints).
- **Assurance**
  That dispensers and patients have assurance of the provenance of electronic prescriptions.

Definitions

Login of an individual means a password or other secret, a device, a biometric identifier, a combination of these, or any other method of authenticating the identity of the individual at the point of access to an electronic prescribing system.

Healthcare organisation means an entity, or a part of an entity, that has conducted, conducts, or will conduct, an enterprise that provides healthcare (including healthcare provided free of charge).

Unique identifier means an HPI-I, provider number, prescriber number, or any other agreed method of identifying the individual prescriber.

Focus of requirements

These requirements provide a set of key principles for a safe system to support prescribing and dispensing of prescriptions in the electronic environment within the relevant legislative framework. As such, the requirements do not address all facets of the nationally available electronic prescriptions service. These requirements specifically focus on:

- System authentication and authorisation plus management of those controls.
- Auditing of prescribing and dispensing access and actions.
- Clear identification and non-repudiation of prescribers.
- Provenance of the prescription information.

Requirements for generation

The generation of the electronic prescription must meet the following criteria:

1 Only healthcare professionals with the legal right to prescribe medicines can use the electronic prescribing system to generate electronic prescriptions.

2 The prescriber must be issued with a login that identifies the prescriber to the electronic prescribing system and which is attached to a unique identity of the prescriber.

3 Information about access to, use of, and time of use of the system is preserved such that records are retained of each person who was given a login and occasions of user access. This information will be capable of being accessed in a timely and readily usable manner for audit and enforcement purposes.

4 The prescriber must use their login to perform all actions in the electronic prescribing system. The prescriber's unique identifier shall be attached to all actions performed using the prescriber's login.

5 The organisation that issues the prescriber's login, the healthcare organisation that operates the electronic prescribing system, and the prescriber must each take all reasonable steps to protect a prescriber's login and ensure it is not used by another person.

6 A prescriber's login will not be used by another person.

7 The prescribing software must display the particulars of the prescription required by state and territory legislation to the prescriber and obtain a final approval from the prescriber prior to finalising the prescription for electronic distribution.

8 A unique identifier of the prescriber must be included in the electronic prescription content.

9 The prescriber must re-present their login when approving an electronic prescription for a drug of dependence or misuse (as defined in the respective state or territory legislation).

10 The particulars of any electronic prescription generated will be stored in a permanent and non-alterable manner within the clinical or medicines record of the person or animal for whom the electronic prescription was generated.

11 The prescriber must only use an electronic prescribing system compliant with the national requirements for electronic prescriptions to generate electronic prescriptions.

Requirements for communication

The communication of the electronic prescription must meet the following criteria:

1 Only electronic prescriptions generated in accordance with the above criteria shall be made available to the dispenser.

2 There will be no alteration of electronic prescriptions between the time of generation and the time of dispense. The software will identify dispensers and allow them to annotate a prescription (subject to regulatory constraints), create a record of supply and ensure a record is capable of being accessed for regulatory purposes.

3 The software will ensure that once the electronic prescription has been dispensed in accordance with the prescriber's instructions, the prescription is cancelled.

4 The electronic prescription content must be in an electronic format that conforms to the national digital health technical requirements.

5 The electronic prescription must be transmitted in a manner that conforms to the national digital health requirements.

6 The electronic prescription will be capable of being dispensed in any pharmacy or other authorised place irrespective of which authorised prescriber issued the prescription and which state or territory it was issued in (subject to regulatory constraints).

7 Dispensers shall only dispense from an electronic prescription that has been generated and communicated in accordance with these requirements.

Publication date: 29 September 2017

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Acknowledgements

Council of Australian Governments
The Australian Digital Health Agency is jointly funded by the Australian Government and all state and territory governments.