

March 16, 2019

The Honorable Representative Brenda Landwehr, Chair
Honorable Members of the House Health and Human Services Committee
Kansas State House of Representatives
Topeka, KS

RE: House Bill 2389 – Electronic Prescribing

Dear Representative Landwehr and Members of the House Health and Human Services Committee:

On behalf of the members of the National Association of Chain Drug Stores (NACDS) operating in Kansas, I would like to thank you for hearing House Bill 2389 – electronic prescribing of controlled substances. Members of NACDS with a presence in Kansas operate 313 store fronts, employ 30,000 full and part-time Kansans and pay over \$789 million in state taxes.

We would like to thank the many stakeholders who have worked to put forward House Bill 2389 in an effort to help address the Opioid crisis.

The Board of Director of NACDS believe there are four strategies that are necessary to **reduce** Opioid addiction in this country:

- Limiting initial Opioid prescriptions to a seven-day supply;
- Creating a national prescription drug data base through collaboration;
- Providing a drug take-back program; and
- Requiring that all prescriptions be issued electronically, with limited exceptions.

Chain pharmacy supports policies that promote the use of electronic prescribing to transmit prescription information between prescribers and pharmacists. Use of this technology will improve safety and security in the prescribing process.

In recent years, the adoption of electronic prescribing has increased dramatically. According to the most recent data available, 1.74 billion prescriptions were issued electronically in the United States last year, which equates to more than 4.7 million prescriptions per day.¹ While that number continues to grow, there is room to further improve the rate of electronic prescribing, particularly with controlled substance prescriptions, which lag behind overall adoption of this beneficial technology.

¹ The Surescripts *2017 National Progress Report* is available here: <https://surescripts.com/news-center/national-progress-report-2017/>

Chain pharmacy urges the adoption of laws and policies requiring electronic prescriptions where practical, as use of electronic prescribing technologies have numerous benefits for both patients and healthcare providers. Recognizing the important role of electronic prescribing in helping to curb the opioid crisis, Congress recently enacted federal legislation requiring controlled substances prescriptions covered under Medicare Part D to be electronically transmitted starting in 2021.² We encourage lawmakers to build upon this effort and extend the mandate to apply to all prescriptions issued for controlled substances and not just those covered by Medicare.

The Benefits of Mandatory Electronic Prescribing:

- Electronic prescribing of controlled substances adds new dimensions of safety and security. Electronic controlled substance prescriptions cannot be altered, cannot be copied, and are electronically trackable. Furthermore, the federal DEA rules for electronic controlled substances prescriptions establish strict security measures, such as two-factor authentication, that reduce the likelihood of fraudulent prescribing. Notably, the state of New York saw a 70% reduction in the rate of lost or stolen prescription forms after implementing its own mandatory e-prescribing law.³
- Studies show that electronic prescriptions are less prone to errors. According to a study conducted at a Johns Hopkins Medication outpatient pharmacy, 89% of handwritten prescriptions failed to meet best practice guidelines or were missing information that would otherwise be prompted by an electronic prescribing system. By comparison, not a single prescription in that study issued electronically contained these types of errors.⁴
- Electronic prescribing practices reduce the number of prescriptions that go unfilled and serve to improve medication adherence. Electronic prescriptions are sent directly to the patient's pharmacy of choice. This technology allows healthcare providers to monitor and improve patient first fill adherence, as patients are more likely to fill prescriptions that are sent electronically to their pharmacy, as opposed to having to take the prescription to the pharmacy themselves.
- Electronic prescribing practices improve patient care and outcomes. Electronic prescribing eliminates handwriting errors, and this technology allows prescribers to track whether the prescription was filled and how often it is refilled. Electronic prescribing tools also enable clinical decision-making at point of care; when electronic prescribing is part of a healthcare provider's electronic health record system, prescriptions can be checked for interactions with patient medications, health conditions, and allergies. This serves to improve patient outcomes.

² The *Support for Patients and Communities Act* (H.R. 6) was enacted to include the Every Prescription Conveyed Securely Act, legislation requiring Schedule II through V controlled substances prescriptions covered under Medicare Part D to be electronically transmitted starting in 2021.

³ Remarks of Anita Murray, Deputy Director, New York State Department of Health at the Harold Rogers Prescription Drug Monitoring Program National Meeting (September 6, 2017)

⁴ http://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/news/media/releases/researchers_find_handwritten_opioid_prescriptions_are_more_prone_to_mistakes_

- Electronic prescribing improves workflow in healthcare settings. Electronic prescribing reduces the administrative burden on physicians and clinical office staff responding to prescription refill authorization. Further, electronic prescribing streamlines the process of getting the prescription to the pharmacy, thereby reducing the time spent by pharmacists and prescribers on the phone. Finally, this technology allows for controlled substance prescriptions to be transmitted electronically along with other prescriptions.
- Electronic prescribing practices gives prescribers more flexibility with getting needed prescriptions into the hands of patients. Electronic prescriptions eliminate the need for patients to have to travel to the prescriber's office to pick up a hard copy prescription, which is especially useful when patients are out of town.
- Electronic prescribing drives down healthcare costs. Through the use of tools that allow for greater price transparency at the point of prescribing and enhanced formulary compliance, electronic prescribing practices can help to control healthcare costs.

On behalf of the members of NACDS I thank you for this opportunity to present our support of House Bill 2389 and the agreed to amendments. We stand ready to work toward the extremely important goals of this legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lis Houchen". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lis Houchen

Regional Director, State Government Affairs

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