



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**SURESCRIPTS RELEASES ANNUAL STATE RANKINGS AND PROGRESS REPORTS
DETAILING E-PRESCRIBING USE AND ADOPTION STATISTICS FOR ALL 50 STATES**

**Massachusetts Prescribers Now Route More Than 20 Percent of Prescriptions Electronically,
Followed by Rhode Island at 17 Percent**

**Tennessee Gov. Phil Bredesen and Vermont Gov. Jim Douglas Accept Safe-Rx™ Award,
Highlighting States' Improved Use of E-Prescribing**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – June 22, 2009 – At an event at the National Press Club, Surescripts announced today that Massachusetts ranks first in the nation when it comes to routing prescriptions electronically. According to the results of an annual nationwide audit of electronic prescriptions routed in 2008, it was determined that prescribers in the Bay State sent more than 6.7 million prescriptions electronically, representing 20.5 percent of all eligible prescriptions in the state – as compared to 2.3 percent in 2005. For this accomplishment, Massachusetts was recognized, along with 14 other states, at the fourth annual Safe-Rx Awards.

Surescripts created the Safe-Rx Awards to raise awareness of e-prescribing as a means of enhancing patient safety by providing a more secure, accurate and informed prescribing process.

“Congratulations to all the Safe-Rx Award winners for increasing the use of e-prescribing and for the benefit it has brought to the economy, safety and quality of patient care in communities throughout their states,” said Harry Totonis, president and CEO of Surescripts. “And as much as this program is about measuring and recognizing real success, its greater purpose is to highlight the leaders who are driving that success and the stories of how they are doing it. As the numbers and rankings suggest, each year there are more and more examples of how a state and the various stakeholders within the state can work together to drive e-prescribing adoption and use. We congratulate those leaders and hope that their examples will inspire and inform many more successful efforts in many more states in the year ahead.”

“The Massachusetts model should serve as a roadmap for the rest of the nation,” said U.S. Sen. John Kerry (D-Mass.). “Electronic prescribing saves money, improves efficiency and, most importantly, reduces life or death medical errors. While we debate how to reform our healthcare system, improve quality and lower costs, one of our top priorities should include modernizing the way physicians write prescriptions.”

In its first three years, the Safe-Rx Award was given annually by Surescripts to the top 10 e-prescribing states in the nation. In an effort to measure and recognize critical progress occurring outside states that finished in the top 10, Surescripts has introduced a new category of state rankings: the Top 5 Most Improved (see both lists for 2008 below).

Top 10 E-Prescribing States

1. Massachusetts
2. Rhode Island
3. Michigan
4. Nevada
5. Delaware

Top 5 Most Improved States

1. Vermont
2. Tennessee
3. Kansas
4. Illinois
5. Missouri

6. North Carolina
 7. Pennsylvania*
 8. Connecticut
 9. Maine*
 10. Arizona
- *New to the top 10*

Today's event featured Tennessee Gov. Phil Bredesen and Vermont Gov. Jim Douglas, co-chairs of the State Alliance for e-Health and co-hosts of the Fourth Annual Safe-Rx Awards. The State Alliance was created by the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices in January 2007 to improve the nation's healthcare system by forming a collaborative body that enables states to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the health information technology initiatives they develop. The State Alliance has recognized the potential for e-prescribing to improve both patient safety and the health of all Americans and has encouraged states to be proactive in creating and implementing policies that advance this and other e-health initiatives. Govs. Bredesen and Douglas were also on hand to receive Safe-Rx Awards recognizing their states' sizable jumps in e-prescribing use.

"The State Alliance recognized early on that encouraging states to make e-prescribing a top priority would have an immense value in our electronic health efforts," said Bredesen. "Paperless prescribing is making its way into the health care mainstream in Tennessee and across the nation. It's our hope to see e-prescribing become a natural part of every health care provider's workflow because of its practical benefits to patients in providing better care."

"To the State Alliance, e-prescribing is important to building momentum toward the goals of an effective health care system and improved public health," said Vermont Governor Jim Douglas. "And I'm proud that e-prescribing has been an integral part of Vermont's Health Information Technology strategy from the start. That's because e-prescribing is a fundamental system improvement for ensuring accurate, timely health care communication. Much of Vermont health care reform is about utilizing the right tools to enhance our *systemic* approach to health care reform and the evidence regarding the value of e-prescribing is clear."

Surescripts Announces A Meaningful Change to Future State Rankings

Historically, the Safe-Rx Awards have been based on an analysis of data from new prescriptions and refill responses electronically routed over the Surescripts network. States were ranked and recognized according to the number of prescriptions routed electronically in 2008 as a percentage of the total number of prescriptions eligible for electronic routing.

In January 2010, Surescripts will release a new state ranking. Using data from 2009, the rankings will measure use of not one, but three critical steps in electronic prescribing:

1. **Prescription Benefit:** Electronically accessing a patient's prescription benefit information.
2. **Prescription History:** With a patient's consent, electronically accessing that patient's prescription history from pharmacies and payers.
3. **Prescription Routing:** Electronically routing the patient's prescription to their choice of pharmacy and electronically reviewing and responding to a prescription renewal request that pharmacies send to the physicians' practices for approval.

This approach recognizes the combined role that prescription benefit, history and routing play in improving the overall safety, efficiency, cost and quality of the prescribing process. It is Surescripts' position that measuring and reporting the actual use of all three of these services helps define "meaningful use of electronic prescribing" under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

For a full description of the change in ranking methodology, go to www.surescripts.com/Safe-Rx.

What About My State?

Individuals who are interested in finding out how their state is progressing in its efforts to move to e-prescribing can go to the Safe-Rx Awards Web site at www.surescripts.com/Safe-Rx. The site shows a complete ranking of all 50 states and the District of Columbia based on prescription routing. For an in-depth statistical review of each state's progress across a number of e-prescribing use and adoption metrics, go to the U.S. maps on either www.surescripts.com/Safe-Rx or www.surescripts.com/stats and click on your state.

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Honored With Safe-Rx Evangelist Award

The Safe-Rx Evangelist Award goes to a single person or organization whose leadership has made an extraordinarily positive impact on raising awareness and reducing medication errors by promoting the adoption and use of electronic prescribing. In 2008, the Safe-Rx Evangelist Award went to Health and Human Services Secretary Michael Leavitt. In 2007, the Safe-Rx Evangelist Award went to the Institute of Medicine for its breakthrough report *Preventing Medication Errors*.

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts (BCBS MA) is widely known as a leader in electronic prescribing and health information technology initiatives. It was one of the very first organizations to embark on an initiative to encourage electronic prescribing with physicians because of the many patient safety, practice efficiency and cost saving benefits. BCBSMA took a very collaborative approach, bringing in multiple health plans to create the eRx Collaborative – itself a prominent advocate for e-prescribing – and ensuring that prescribers would have access to more comprehensive prescription benefit and prescription history information on their patients.

“Working together sends a message that e-prescribing is important for everyone in the community,” said Steve Fox, vice president of provider network management at BCBSMA. “As a leader in e-health initiatives and e-prescribing programs, BCBSMA will continue to focus on the delivery and promotion of technology to enable a delivery system that reliably provides safe, effective and affordable patient-centered care.”

Surescripts Salutes E-Prescribers of the Year

This year, Surescripts is recognizing six prescribers for the outstanding leadership they have shown through their own use of e-prescribing. Three users of standalone e-prescribing software and three users of electronic medical record software received Safe-Rx Awards and were recognized as E-Prescribers of the Year:

Standalone E-Prescribing Users

Dr. Amando Garza (Laredo, Texas)
Dr. Steven Green (Lancaster, Ky.)
Dr. Abdul Kabir (Monroe, Mich.)

EMR Users

Dr. Narinder Batra (Adrian, Mich.)
Dr. Michael Brewer (Springfield, Ill.)
Dr. Mark Earhart (Watkinsville, Ga.)

“More and more doctors, nurse practitioners and physician assistants are turning to e-prescribing for the safety, efficiency and quality advantages it provides them and their patients,” said Dr. Peter Basch, medical director for ambulatory clinical systems at MedStar Health. “In fact, for many clinicians, their introduction to and use of e-prescribing has helped them emerge as leaders in their communities towards the effective use of health information technology as part of everyday medical care.”

About Surescripts

Surescripts is the result of a 2008 merger between the country's two leading health information networks: RxHub and SureScripts. Surescripts gives healthcare providers secure, electronic access to prescription and health information that can save their patients' lives, improve efficiency

and reduce the cost of healthcare for all. Available during emergencies or routine care, the Surescripts network connects prescribers in all 50 states through their choice of e-prescribing software to the nation's leading payers, chain pharmacies and independent pharmacies. Through its work in standards, certification, education and collaboration at the national, regional and state levels, Surescripts and its network have become the backbone that facilitates e-prescribing. For more information, go to www.surescripts.com.

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