



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**U.S. ACHIEVES MAJOR MILESTONES IN E-PRESCRIBING**

**Nation Passed 100,000 Prescriber Mark in First Quarter of 2009  
While Use of E-Prescribing Jumped 61 Percent**

**Release of National Progress Report on E-Prescribing Details Significant Growth in  
Adoption and Use as Well as Critical Next Steps**

**ALEXANDRIA, Va. and ST. PAUL, Minn. – April 22, 2009** – Surescripts®, which operates the country's largest national electronic prescribing network, today announced that more than 100,000 prescribers are now routing prescriptions electronically in the U.S. What's more, the use of three critical components of e-prescribing – electronic prescription benefit, history and routing – jumped 61 percent in the first quarter of 2009, resulting in more than 134 million e-prescribing messages being exchanged among prescribers, payers and pharmacies.

"In the past two years, the U.S. has gone from 19,000 to 103,000 prescribers routing prescriptions electronically – punctuated by 39 percent sequential growth in prescriber adoption in the first quarter of this year," said Harry Totonis, president and CEO of Surescripts. "The past two years have also witnessed a sevenfold increase in the use of e-prescribing. And while this growth shows clear evidence that the steps taken by policymakers, prescribers, payers, pharmacies and others are having a positive impact, swift and specific action is required for the U.S. to achieve mainstream adoption and use of e-prescribing."

Today's announcement features the release of the annual *National Progress Report on E-Prescribing*. Based on the operations of the Surescripts network, the Report features statistics and graphics detailing the status of e-prescribing adoption and use in the U.S. from 2006 through 2008. For a downloadable copy of the *National Progress Report on E-Prescribing*, go to [www.surescripts.com/report](http://www.surescripts.com/report).

**The growth of e-prescribing use and adoption in 2008 was significant. Among the *National Progress Report's* key findings:**

- By the end of 2008, there were 74,000 active prescribers – vs. 36,000 at the end of 2007 and 16,000 in 2006.
- Prescriber use of benefit information and prescription history grew from 37 million in 2007 to 78 million in 2008 and from 6 million in 2007 to 16 million in 2008, respectively.
- Prescriptions routed electronically more than doubled from 29 million in 2007 to 68 million in 2008.
- By the end of 2008, increased participation by payers in e-prescribing enabled access to prescription benefit and history information for 65 percent of patients in the U.S.



- Seven states are connected to the Surescripts network through their pharmacy benefit managers to deliver prescription information for fee-for-service Medicaid patients.
- At the end of 2008, approximately 76 percent of community pharmacies and six of the largest mail-order pharmacies in the U.S. were connected for prescription routing.

**In 2008, there were three factors that most influenced the growth of e-prescribing:**

- Significant attention focused on e-prescribing at the federal and state policy level.
- National programs drove e-prescribing and offered practical tools to assist the industry in moving forward.
- E-prescribing adoption accelerated among key groups: payers (including PBMs and Medicaid plans), prescribers, and pharmacies.

**The nationwide effort to replace paper prescriptions with more informed, paperless prescribing is far from over.** Today, for example, only about 10 percent of eligible prescriptions are routed electronically. Accordingly, Surescripts recommends that five actions be taken at the earliest opportunity to continue the growth of e-prescribing use and adoption and to further secure reductions in cost as well as improvements in safety and efficiency:

**Action #1:** Continue to work with the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) to pass regulations that allow controlled substances to be electronically prescribed in a way that is workable and scalable.

**Action #2:** Work to ensure that “meaningful use” under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 requires the actual use of e-prescribing.

**Action #3:** Fill gaps in e-prescribing participation among payers, state Medicaid programs and independent pharmacies.

**Action #4:** Raise awareness across the industry and encourage deployment and use of e-prescribing – encompassing prescription benefit, prescription history and prescription routing.

**Action #5:** Provide education, financial incentives and implementation assistance for all prescribers, with a particular focus on addressing the needs of small and medium-size practices.

**Surescripts will soon release individual state progress reports and announce the latest rankings of all 50 states plus Washington, D.C.. as part of the 4th Annual Safe-Rx Awards.** To receive notice regarding the state progress reports, state rankings and Safe-Rx Awards, go to <http://surescripts.com/news-sign-up.html>.



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**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](http://www.surescripts.com).

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