



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**1 IN 3 PRESCRIPTIONS ARE NOW E-PRESCRIPTIONS IN MASSACHUSETTS
AS NUMBER OF E-PRESCRIBING PHYSICIANS GROWS TO 200,000 NATIONWIDE**

**Annual 1-50 Ranking of States' E-Prescribing Use Shows Massachusetts #No.1,
Followed by Michigan and Rhode Island**

**President's Health Information Technology Lead, Dr. David Blumenthal,
Recognizes Leading States During Capitol Hill Event**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Sept. 21, 2010 – At an event on Capitol Hill today featuring elected officials and leaders from throughout the nation's health care system, Surescripts announced that Massachusetts ranks first in the nation when it comes to use of electronic prescribing. The announcement took place at the annual Safe-Rx Awards, where Surescripts also announced that more than 200,000 office-based prescribers – one out of every three physicians, nurse practitioners and physician assistants in the United States – now use e-prescribing. By replacing a pen and paper prescription pad with a more accurate, reliable and secure electronic prescription and by allowing doctors to access critical information regarding their patients' medications and health plan coverage, e-prescribing saves lives, time and money, and improves the quality of care.

Today's announcement was hailed as an important milestone by the man leading the Obama administration's efforts to drive greater use of health information technology – Dr. David Blumenthal. Blumenthal was joined by Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse and other state and national leaders at today's event where they seized the opportunity to recognize the meaningful change occurring every day in how millions of Americans receive their prescriptions.

"Health information technology offers great promise to improve the quality and efficiency of care for every person", said Dr. David Blumenthal, national coordinator for health information technology for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. "As we have seen today, electronic prescribing is a valuable health IT tool for a rapidly growing number of health care providers. The shift from the traditional paper prescription pad to a secure, electronic format has improved the efficiency, accuracy and quality of the prescription process for both providers and patients."

"I have long believed that technology improvements can help achieve a health care system that does a better job of keeping people healthy for less money," said U.S. Sen. Carl Levin (D-Mich.). "I'm proud of Michigan's achievements in using e-prescriptions, and hope it can guide other states to make similar improvements that achieve better treatment at lower cost."

Top 10 States With Highest Rates of E-Prescribing*

1. Massachusetts
2. Michigan
3. Rhode Island
4. Delaware
5. North Carolina

6. Connecticut
7. Pennsylvania
8. Hawaii*
9. Indiana*
10. Florida*

**New to the top 10*

According to the results of an annual nationwide audit of electronic prescribing use, it was determined that prescribers in the Bay State sent more than 11 million prescriptions electronically in 2009, representing 32.3 percent of all prescriptions in the state. For this accomplishment, Massachusetts was recognized at the fifth annual Safe-Rx Awards along with nine other states that made the greatest use of e-prescribing in 2009. To view the complete ranking, go to www.surescripts.com/safe-rx.

Ranking aside, e-prescribing use is growing substantially across all states in the U.S. In 2009, 47 states more than doubled their use of prescription routing while 39 more than doubled their use of prescription benefit information. To view reports detailing the growth of e-prescribing adoption and use in all 50 states plus Washington, D.C., go to surescripts.com/stats.

The Safe-Rx Awards celebrate leadership and exceptional commitment to advancing health care safety, efficiency and quality through the use of e-prescribing. They reflect Surescripts' long-standing collaboration with the nation's pharmacies, payers, physicians and technology vendors to support the exchange of health information over a network that is non commercial, neutral, transparent and standards-based. The Awards are based on a ranking that measures states' actual use of e-prescribing. As a result, the ranking and Awards have been referenced as a proxy for states' meaningful use of electronic health records.

Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse Honored With Safe-Rx Evangelist Award

The Safe-Rx Evangelist Award goes to a single person or organization whose work has made an extraordinary impact on the awareness and use of e-prescribing as a critical means of reducing medication errors. It is the only award of its kind in health care and each year attracts broad attention from industry, government and the media. This year's recipient of the Safe-Rx Evangelist Award is Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI). Sen. Whitehouse joins the company of other distinguished recipients, including former Health and Human Services Secretary Michael Leavitt (2008) and the Institute of Medicine (2007).

The engine behind Rhode Island's success in converting from paper to digital health care has been a collaborative effort involving health care leaders from across the state. It began with The Rhode Island Quality Institute, founded by Sen. Whitehouse in 2001. More recently, Sen. Whitehouse led Congressional efforts to encourage the Drug Enforcement Administration to change its policy preventing the e-prescribing of controlled substances. The new DEA rule allowing the electronic prescribing of controlled substances became effective June 1, 2010.

"I'm honored to receive this award today from Surescripts," said Whitehouse. "I've fought for widespread adoption of electronic prescribing because I've seen the results in my home state of Rhode Island, the first state to achieve 100 percent pharmacy adoption of this technology. E-prescribing reduces cost and increases quality of care, and I'll continue working to make it available nationwide."

"Congratulations to this year's Safe-Rx Award winners and to all the states for taking action to improve one of the most fundamental parts of our nation's health care system," said Harry Totonis, president and CEO of Surescripts. "Today – and over 1 million times a day -- pharmacies, health plans, physicians and patients in communities throughout the country benefit from the improved safety, efficiency and lower cost associated with e-prescribing. But e-prescribing is just the first step in the nation's plan for health information technology, and it is only

one component of an electronic health record. Surescripts is committed to helping these same communities build a more efficient, secure and reliable means of sharing a broader set of health information such as lab results and doctors' notes. This will not be easy, but neither was convincing the first 200,000 physicians to get rid of their prescription pads. Our experience tells us that, working together, health information technology can and will continue to drive meaningful improvements in care."

A Meaningful Change to State Ranking

Beginning with this year's Awards, Surescripts has applied a new, more comprehensive method for ranking states' use of e-prescribing – one that measures the use of three critical steps: electronically confirming a patient's prescription benefit information prior to sending the e-prescription; electronically cross-referencing a patient's medication history with pharmacies and payers; and electronically routing a prescription to the patient's choice of pharmacy.

What's more, the new ranking method and associated statistics represent a one-of-a-kind opportunity for health care and policy leaders to track meaningful use of electronic health records. Because prescription benefit, medication history and prescription routing assist in supporting at least four meaningful uses of an electronic health record, Surescripts' state statistics and ranking can now serve as a valuable proxy for tracking state and national progress against the administration's health IT agenda.**

What About My State?

Details of the performance and ranking of all 50 states and the District of Columbia can be found on www.surescripts.com/safe-rx. The website includes listings of organizations that have contributed toward the success of e-prescribing adoption and use in the top 10 states.

** E-prescribing assists in supporting at least four meaningful use objectives as specified by the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology. These are the supported objectives: Maintain active medication list; generate and transmit permissible prescription electronically; implement drug formulary checks; and perform medication reconciliation between care settings. For a copy of the meaningful use regulations for electronic health records, go to <http://healthpolicyandreform.nejm.org/?p=3732>.

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About Surescripts

Surescripts operates the nation's largest e-prescription network and supports the most comprehensive ecosystem of health care organizations nationwide. Surescripts was founded on the principles of neutrality, transparency, interoperability, efficiency, collaboration and quality. Surescripts connects prescribers in all 50 states through their choice of e-prescribing software to the nation's leading payers, chain pharmacies and independent pharmacies. The Nation's E-Prescription Network is available every day to health care providers in need of low-cost, electronic access to prescription and health information. By securely and reliably providing that information during emergencies and routine care, Surescripts is committed to saving lives, improving efficiency and reducing the cost of health care for all. For more information, go to www.surescripts.com and follow us at twitter.com/surescripts.

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