



Media release

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Electronic prescriptions making telehealth easier for Australians

Sydneysiders facing COVID-19 social distancing requirements are reminded they can ask their GP for an electronic prescription when getting their prescription medicines.

NSW residents, like the majority of Australians, can now choose an electronic prescription as an alternative to a paper prescription. To meet the Government's commitment to deliver electronic prescriptions in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the nation's healthcare sector has worked together to achieve this digital innovation.

Amanda Cattermole, CEO of the Australian Digital Health Agency said "Sydneysiders facing COVID-19 social distancing requirements are reminded they can ask their GP for an electronic prescription when getting their prescription medicines.

"More than 12 million electronic prescriptions have already been issued, as healthcare providers and patients see the benefits of going digital," she said.

"Electronic prescriptions are providing safer, faster and more efficient supply of prescriptions to Australians – in person via their doctor or via a telehealth consultation – sent straight to their mobile phone or by email."

"Options for patients to forward their electronic prescription to their local pharmacy or use consumer medication management apps mean electronic prescriptions are especially convenient under COVID-19 lockdown. Some pharmacies can even home deliver medicines to support patients in staying at home."

"More than 22,000 prescribers are now issuing electronic prescriptions to patients and at least 98% of all community pharmacies around the country are dispensing them."

Dr Charlotte Hespe, a general practitioner with a practice in inner-city Sydney, said the transition to electronic prescriptions is straightforward for GPs.

"Most practice management software now has the capability to issue electronic prescriptions. If it is a patient's choice to receive an electronic prescription instead of a paper prescription, then the GP just needs to select the electronic script option instead of 'print' when issuing a prescription," said Dr Hespe.

While there are many benefits of electronic prescriptions, it is not mandatory. Patients and prescribers will continue to be able to choose a paper prescription if that is their preference.

Clinical software providers and consumer medication management apps continue to enhance their products to provide future options and further convenience when using electronic prescriptions for medicine supply.

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About the Australian Digital Health Agency

When it comes to improving the health of all Australians, the role of digital innovation and connection is a vital part of a modern, accessible healthcare system. Against the backdrop of COVID-19, digital health has seen exponential growth in relevance and importance, making it more pertinent than ever for all Australians and healthcare providers.

Better patient healthcare and health outcomes are possible when you have a health infrastructure that can be safely accessed, easily used and responsibly shared.

To achieve this, the National Digital Health Strategy is establishing the foundations for a sustainable health system that constantly improves. It underpins and coordinates work that is already happening between governments, healthcare providers, consumers, innovators and the technology industry.

For further information: www.digitalhealth.gov.au.