



21 August 2020

## **Electronic Prescriptions – meeting the needs of patients in the ACT**

The Pharmacy Guild of Australia ACT Branch is working with the RACGP and the Australian Digital Health Agency (ADHA) to ensure that community pharmacies in the ACT are established as a community of interest (COI) in this early testing phase of electronic prescriptions.

Presently there are over 80 community pharmacies in the ACT and they're committed to meeting the needs of their patients, particularly through the convenience that electronic prescriptions can provide.

Pharmacies are keen to support the implementation of electronic prescriptions as quickly as possible, but there are a number of steps they are required to take in order to be fully ready and compliant. That includes changes to software, workflow processes, staff training and purchasing of hardware. This may take a period of time which can mean the pharmacy may not be immediately ready to dispense for a patient who arrives in the pharmacy with an electronic prescription – without prior notice.

To help your patients ensure they can access their medication via an electronic prescription if they so choose, we would ask that GPs give their local pharmacy a call to ensure they are fully ready and compliant to support electronic prescriptions.

If your patient prefers you can of course continue to prescribe via paper, or image-based prescriptions as implemented under COVID-19, but it's important to note that a pharmacy cannot accept both paper and an electronic prescription. It's one or the other.

At this time, we would also advise that pharmacists are also mindful that this version of electronic prescriptions, the token model (QR code on a smartphone) presents challenges for some of our patients, including our older Australians, those with a disability and those who have chronic conditions with multiple scripts.

The Pharmacy Guild of Australia ACT Branch is supportive of electronic prescriptions via the token model, but also remains committed to seeing the Active Script List model being tested in the coming weeks, which will not require the use of multiple tokens or mobiles. We believe this model will provide all patients with an easier and less confusing means of accessing their medication safely.

Ultimately pharmacists in the ACT wish to work with GPs and prescribers to support changes to the way we care for patients which allows a patient to ensure continuity of care with their GP and pharmacist in which ensures medication adherence and patient safety.

To check if your local pharmacy is ready for electronic prescriptions, you can contact the RACGP for advice, Pharmacy Guild phone 62708900 or check the website: <https://www.findapharmacy.com.au/>

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