

E-prescribing

May 2009

This federal pilot project encourages the use of electronic systems for prescriptions in an effort to deliver safer and more efficient patient care while also cutting costs.

Federal officials think e-prescribing – where prescriptions are generated through an automated data-entry process utilizing special software and a network linked to pharmacies – could help save up to \$154 million over the next five years.

Indiana currently lags behind the states of Illinois, Michigan, Ohio and Kentucky and national averages.

Indiana ranked 33rd in the number of e-prescriptions in a 2007 Safe-RX survey by pharmaceutical industry technology firm SureScripts-RX Hub.

Purdue's PharmaTAP, an effort launched with funding from the Lilly Endowment and led by the university's Technical Assistance Program, also is focused on helping address Indiana's e-prescribing needs.

Change, as in any industry, is hard especially in an arena that constitutes one of the largest paper-based processes in the United States.

When we look back a decade from now, hopefully, we will see this federal e-prescribing pilot project as an important piece of the puzzle that paved the way for a broader reform of this nation's health-care system.

Source: Vincent Duffy

Vincent Duffy is a Purdue professor of industrial engineering and researcher at Discovery Park's Regenstrief Center for Healthcare Engineering.

Note: It is not anticipated that premium credits will be offered for e-prescribing.

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