

Proper Submission of Electronically Signed Electronic Prescriptions

The purpose of this communication is to clarify Illinois law regarding electronic prescriptions and electronic signatures, and what pharmacists can accept as a dispensing order.

To prevent drug diversion and provide secure prescription document control, Illinois law only allows pharmacists to dispense electronically signed prescriptions from prescribers on electronic prescriptions. **An electronic prescription is one that is electronically transmitted from a prescriber's electronic prescription entry system directly to a pharmacy. There can be no intermediary step or disruption in the transfer of the electronic prescription from the prescriber to the pharmacy.** Printing a copy of an electronic prescription disrupts direct electronic transmission. So, the printed copy is NOT considered an electronic prescription even though it might say: "This order was electronically signed by." Only the electronic record of the prescription is considered to be the electronic prescription.

Illinois pharmacy law does not prohibit printing copies of electronic prescriptions, but considers such copies as written prescriptions which must include the prescriber's handwritten signature. Consequently, a pharmacy may NOT accept a fax of a printed, electronic prescription for dispensing without the prescriber's valid handwritten signature on it.

At this point in time, Care Connection does not have the capability to directly transmit electronic prescriptions to pharmacies, other than to Advocate hospital inpatient pharmacies.

Advocate Home Care Products, Inc., is currently working with the System Pharmacy Council and Care Connection to develop an electronic prescription that meets the requirements set forth by the state and that can be sent electronically to our pharmacy. If you have any question regarding the transmission of electronic prescriptions, please call Advocate Home Care Products Home Infusion Pharmacy at 630.963.3200 and ask for the pharmacy manager.