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Choosing the Right Path for Your Practice

Arizona's Controlled Substances Prescription Monitoring Program (PMP)

Arizona's controlled substances prescription monitoring program (PMP), effective October 16, 2017, mandates that all prescribers check a patient's utilization history through the state PMP before prescribing an opioid or benzodiazepine drug. However, there are several key exceptions to the mandate that exclude some types of care (i.e. hospice or cancer care), some care locations (i.e. inpatient or residential treatment) and short prescription periods (i.e. no more than 10 days for medical/dental treatment or pain). For more complete information on the mandate and exceptions, see *Arizona's PMP Law: Requirements & Exceptions*.

Checking a patient's utilization history

Before prescribers access the PMP, they must be registered with the Arizona Board of Pharmacy. This registration process also allows a registered prescriber to assign a delegate or delegates who are also able access the database through the prescriber's registration.

There are two types of applications that allow users to access the state PMP. One is through the website of the Board of Pharmacy. Another application allows the statewide HIE, Health Current and electronic health record (EHR) companies to integrate with the state PMP and provide access to registered users.

Here are the three ways that prescribers can access the PMP:

- **Access via the Department of Pharmacy Website**
Users manually enter the prescriber name, license information and patient name to search utilization history. This application is available immediately, and it not only allows users to access Arizona patient utilization history, it also allows users to search other states for patient utilization histories.
- **Access via a Provider EHR**
A provider's EHR must be integrated with the state PMP and set up for access before prescribers are able to access the PMP. Providers should check with their EHR vendor to find out about the availability, timing and costs of this integration and set up. Once this is complete, access through a provider EHR can be effective and efficient.
- **Access via Health Current, the Statewide HIE**
Health Current integrated with the state PMP on August 17, 2017. This means that HIE participants who are connected to the HIE portal have a simple set up process to access the state PMP. Arizona providers who are not yet HIE participants will need to join the HIE and then be connected to the portal in order to access the PMP. Access to the PMP via Health Current can be an effective and efficient option.

The value of checking utilization histories through Health Current

While a Health Current connection offers an efficient workflow solution for accessing the state PMP, there is much more to HIE participation. Today, the HIE contains information on 7 million unique patients, with nearly 400 organizations participating in the HIE, including all major hospitals. For example, information on nearly 95 percent of all hospital inpatient and emergency discharges is available through the HIE. Participants save valuable time and resources with one connection to the HIE that eliminates the need to manage multiple connections to hospitals, reference labs and other providers. In addition, there are many services that help integrate the secure sharing of patient information into provider work flows:

- Alerts – event notifications (admissions, discharges, etc.) sent to participants based on a panel of patients that they wish to track.
- Direct Email – secure email accounts that allow registered users to exchange patient protected health information.
- Portal – secure web-based access that allows selected patient data to be viewed online. This includes access to the PMP Gateway.
- Data Exchange – electronic interfaces between a participant’s EHR and other EHRs or patient tracking systems, including unidirectional and bidirectional exchange.
- Clinical Summaries – comprehensive Continuity of Care Documents (CCDs) containing up to 90 days of a patients recent clinical and encounter information.

Choosing the right path for your practice

There are several key considerations for prescribers in selecting the right option or options for access the state PMP:

- Workflow – Accessing the state PMP through the statewide HIE or a provider’s EHR will offer a much more efficient workflow than the manual process of accessing the CSPMP through the Board of Pharmacy website.
- Costs – There are no participation fees for community providers who participate in the HIE, and there is no cost to access the PMP through the Board of Pharmacy website. However, there could be a significant cost associated with the integration of a provider EHR with the PMP.
- Timing – Access to the PMP through the Board of Pharmacy website is available immediately, and access for HIE participants connected to the HIE portal is available with a brief set up process. For other options listed above, prescribers should check with their EHR vendor or a Health Current representative.

While prescribers may need to access the state PMP through the Board of Pharmacy as a short-term solution, they will want to carefully consider the right long-term approach for their practice. For more information on Health Current and connecting to the statewide prescription database, please visit our website at www.healthcurrent.org or email us at info@healthcurrent.org.