



Contact: Karen Hunt
510-499-3131

For Immediate Release

**ePrescribing in California Making Steady Gains
While Its Full Potential Remains Unrealized: Cal eConnect Gap Analysis Report**

Emeryville, Calif. – February 7, 2012 – Electronic prescribing, known as ePrescribing, is continuing to grow steadily in California, potentially increasing the safety of the prescribing process, according to [a new report](#) from Cal eConnect. About 25 percent of the state’s physicians are sending prescriptions electronically, the report estimates, compared with 3 percent in 2007. At the same time, just 16 percent of eligible prescriptions are routed electronically, despite the fact that most community pharmacies are set up for ePrescribing.

“While much has been done to move California forward on ePrescribing, much more work is ahead,” said Ron Jimenez, MD, co-chair of the Cal eConnect ePrescribing Advisory Group and a practicing pediatrician. “The collaborative environment among health plans, providers, and pharmacies is impressive and momentum is building toward improved, safer care for patients.”

For consumers, ePrescribing means patients do not have to take a paper prescription to their pharmacies; the order is sent electronically directly from their doctor’s office, reducing errors caused by illegible handwriting, while improving administrative efficiencies. Electronic systems help prescribers and pharmacists identify medication allergies, potential harmful drug-to-drug interactions and drug duplications, and check whether patients pick up their medications.

While most patients have prescription benefit information and medication histories available from their health plans, the utilization of this information at the point-of-care is low. Only 18 percent of patient visits involved a prescription benefit query and only 10 percent involved a check of medication history. This measure does not include Kaiser Permanente and Veterans Affairs.

The analysis also found that certain areas of the state have lower access to ePrescribing than others and so lag behind in the potential for safety and efficiency gains. Sacramento, San Jose, Tulare, San Bernardino, and Riverside Counties were among those with high percentages (about 70 to 100 percent) of residents’ covered health plans participating in ePrescribing. Regions in northern California, including Del Norte, Modoc, and Humboldt counties, had low percentages (less than 50 percent).

ePrescribing is a key part of Cal eConnect’s strategy to facilitate and expand health information exchange among unaffiliated health care organizations. The gap analysis report identifies current ePrescribing activity, challenges and gaps in California, and helps set priorities for action in 2012.

The California ePrescribing Gap Analysis is available at <http://www.caleconnect.org/content/2012/01/CalConnectEPrescribeweb.pdf>.

About Cal eConnect:

Cal eConnect serves as the State's governance entity for health information exchange. As such, Cal eConnect is responsible for meeting requirements set forth in the State's grant agreement with the federal Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC). As part of its agreement with the California Health and Human Services Agency, Cal eConnect is charged with enabling electronic health information exchange through governance, project management, and the development of policy, core technical infrastructure, a financial sustainability plan, and stakeholder engagement. For more information visit www.caleconnect.org.