

**E-Signature**

**The Pharmacy Perspective**

# Prescriptions arrive at a pharmacy today...

- **Written by a prescriber** ( not always on a prescription pad).

- Do not always know the prescriber's handwriting
- legibility issues
- missing information
- patient loses prescription

(prescription is sometimes pre-printed and signed by the prescriber)

- **Phone call** ( by the prescriber or “agent”)

- do not always recognize the caller
- “agent” - may not even be part of prescriber's practice
- no audit trail if there is a discrepancy
- misinterpretation and miscommunication of essential information

- **Fax**

- Legibility
- Writing disappears/unreadable over time
- verification of origin can be difficult

**All of these are a legitimate means to  
deliver prescriptions.....  
to the pharmacy**

**Why make e-Prescribing more  
burdensome?**

# E-Prescribing Benefits...

## ■ Quality Assurance Issues

- Text messages - readability
- Prompt for all necessary information
- Integration with host pharmacy system
  - reduce keystrokes
  - eliminate transcription errors

## ■ Security

- Requires sign-on - user ID at prescriber's office.
- E-trail - transaction log.
- Secure connection between office system to Proxymed & SureScripts
- Dedicated private data circuit between SureScripts, ProxyMed, and pharmacies.
- E-Prescribing indicator in prescriber's registration.

# HHS Fact Sheet: HIT Report At-A-Glance

*“Use of modern information technology has the potential to transform the delivery of health care in America for the better – and to do so without heavy-handed regulation or upheaval in the health care sector”*

*HHS Press Office Wednesday July 21, 2004*



# Security...

## ■ Pharmacy and Aggregators

- Secure connection
- private data circuit
- encrypted messaging
- standards to prevent altering transactions

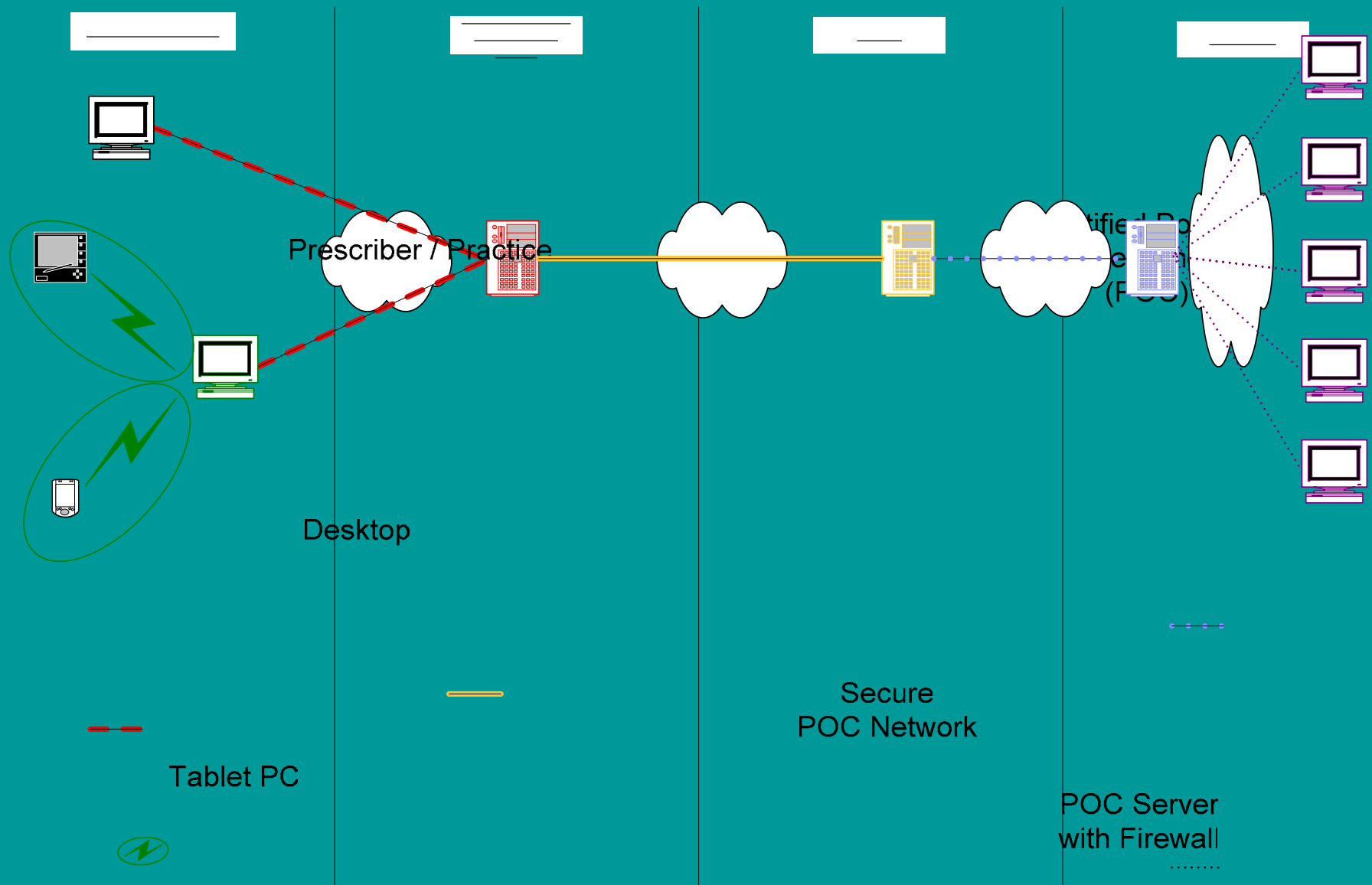
## ■ Pharmacy Systems

- firewalls
- encryption
- No unauthorized access
- log files for all transactions

# E-Prescribing Security Features

- Private lease line
- Public Internet with the following encryption methods
  - VPN connection
  - Utilizing SSL
- Unique prescriber addresses
- Registered users
- Unique pharmacy identifiers - NCPDP Provider ID
- Unique sender ID - Electronic Signature
- *Electronic Signature” means an electronic sound, symbol, or process attached to or logically associated with a record and executed or adopted by a person with the intent to sign the record.*

# Electronic Prescribing Security and eSignature Infrastructure





# **E-Prescribing in Today's Retail Environment**

- Security intrinsic to SureScripts & Proxymed have been adequate to ensure authentication and non-repudiation.
- No immediate need for e-Signature or Digital Signatures
- Security already built into systems in use by retail industry today makes e-Signature requirement less urgent
- Requiring e-Signature and Digital Signatures at this time would significantly impede the progress of e-prescribing and the benefits patients and practitioners would realize from it's implementation.

# Pharmacy Systems

- **Bi-directional capability with prescribers**
- **Use of secure passwords - identifiers**
- **Existing infrastructure - secure**
  - **Board of Pharmacy Approvals for both prescriber and pharmacy systems and the connectivity between them.**
- **Use of PKI - not absolute method of identification**

# Use of a digital signature

- **PKI - public and private key infrastructures**
  - Have not been proven in the industry
  - Complex
  - Each pharmacy - maintain separate PKI
  - Multiple keys for pharmacy chains - users
  - NO guarantee of security
  - Costly to implement - resources & time
  - Barrier to e-Prescribing moving forward

# Current authentication method

- Passwords
- Biometrics
- Secure connections
- Encryption
- Identifiers

# Encourage the Growth of e-Prescribing

- E-prescribing environment today is a big step forward from legacy (manual) processes.
- Goal: Administrative Simplification – improve the quality, safety and efficiency of health care
- Challenge: Avoid over-complication and introduction of burdensome requirements that are not imposed in non-electronic process.
- Solution: Implement ePrescribing architecture that supports all prescriptions (Controlled & non-controlled).
- Practitioners, pharmacists and patients need encouragement and training in order to begin implementing e-Prescribing; the benefits will not be realized if technology is perceived as too onerous or complicated.



# How e-Prescribing Benefits Patients

- **Improved Quality of Care**
  - Improves efficiency of the prescribing process
  - Pharmacists are able to spend more time providing pharmaceutical care (counseling).
  - Reduces potential for errors.
  - Cost reductions realized by health plans due to increased therapy compliance by patients.
- **Improved Privacy**
  - Privacy, quality and security can be improved over paper records via technology that complies with HIPAA

# Patient Care....

- Approximately - 20% of prescription for controlled substances.
- Characterized by immediate use  
emergency room/discharge from hospital
- Prescribed in conjunction with other medication.
  - Cold -cough & antibiotics
  - pain and sleep
- Prohibit E-Rx for one - eliminate others from being E-Rx -  
loss of benefit to the patient.
  - Physicians will not send patient Rxs two separate ways

# Important Concepts to Keep in Mind

- No substitute for pharmacists' professional judgment – ultimate responsibility for ensuring authenticity and accuracy of prescriptions rests with the dispensing pharmacist whether the RX is delivered manually or electronically.
- E-prescribing is secure - exceeds current methods
- Barriers to moving forward have no benefit