

Pharma must prepare for e-prescribing closeup



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THE TERM “iceberg” may seem overly dramatic when considering the impact of e-prescribing on the pharma industry, however, it is an appropriate analogy given the effect it will have on physician behavior over the next few years. Like an iceberg, e-prescribing may not seem like an immediate threat, but it is clearly visible on the not-too-distant horizon.

E-prescription network SureScripts reported that in December 2007, only 6% of physicians

were e-prescribing (*American Medical News*, November 3, 2008). Contrast that with 2010, when a third of all office-based prescribers were routing scripts electronically (The National Progress Report on E-Prescribing and Interoperable Healthcare, 2011, Surescripts LLC).

This 400% increase has been propelled by the federal government and commercial health insurance. The government has impacted e-prescribing through financial incentives from Medicare and Medicaid as well as through \$19.2 billion of improvements in electronic health records as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

As this level of growth is expected to continue, pharma

need to stay focused on how e-prescribing will impact their business. Here are a few ways companies can take advantage of the changing dynamics:

■ **Continually assess the impact of e-prescribing on your products.** While efforts to standardize e-prescribing systems

mas should explore how to help support physician adoption of systems through training programs, perhaps facilitated by their sales force.

■ **Develop brand features that optimize prescribing screens and drop-down menus.** With e-prescribing, physicians’ most com-

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are progressing, considerable variability in the functionality of these systems exists along with diverse physician ability to navigate the technology.

■ **Facilitate physician understanding of e-prescribing.** Phar-

mon exposure to your product will be through the interface on their screen or device.

With the e-prescribing iceberg on the horizon, preparation and monitoring now can help companies enjoy smooth sailing later.



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