

5 ways eRx can help improve adult vaccination rates

How health systems can use electronic prescribing to improve vaccination rates and close care gaps.

Low vaccination rates among U.S. adults increase the incidence of vaccine-preventable diseases (VPDs). Each year, VPDs drive hundreds of thousands of avoidable hospitalizations.^{1,2}

For health systems, this:

- **Strains workload capacity** for ICU and hospital staff, especially during seasonal surges
- **Can harm patient care quality**, especially for those with disabilities and chronic conditions^{3,4}
- **Cuts reimbursement** if hospitalized patients are eventually readmitted⁵

Further, adult vaccination rates – including those for COVID-19 – are embedded in HEDIS quality measures, putting hospital reimbursement and performance at risk.⁶

60%

of eligible adults aged 65+ did not receive a 2025-2026 COVID-19 vaccine⁷

73%

of adults aged 75+ reported not having ever received an RSV vaccine⁸

eRx can help streamline vaccination workflows and close patient care gaps

The strongest vaccine strategies prioritize stocking and administering vaccines on site whenever possible. However, electronic prescribing (eRx) is a valuable tool to help improve vaccine access and follow-through when a vaccine is not stocked, when specific pharmacy coverage rules apply, or if a patient chooses to be vaccinated later or elsewhere.

Whether or not a health system stocks and administers vaccines on site, it should consider an eRx workflow for vaccines. A vaccine eRx workflow may help improve the care journey in five ways, detailed below.

1 EHR order sets can combine vaccine eligibility prompts with eRx workflow guidance, helping providers route patients appropriately at the point of care.

These workflows can reduce missed opportunities and help providers navigate challenging cases, such as Medicare Part D vaccines, where pharmacy adjudication is required and in-clinic administration may not be reimbursed.

2 An electronic prescription can help strengthen the provider recommendation.

Combined with a verbal recommendation, an electronic prescription can help serve as a reminder for a patient to go to the pharmacy.

3 An electronic prescription lays out a clear next step for the patient.

With a vaccine eRx, patients arrive at the pharmacy with greater clarity on which vaccine(s) they need.

4 When sent to the pharmacy, eRx may activate retailer automatic reminder workflows that may increase the likelihood of vaccine uptake.^{9,10}

Once the eRx hits the retailer, it may trigger pharmacy-based text, call, or app-based reminders that help keep the vaccine top of mind without requiring additional effort from the provider or health system.

5 eRx can make vaccination recommendations more visible in future appointments.

An electronically prescribed vaccine can appear in medication lists and future encounter workflows for up to one year, giving providers a foundation for follow-up appointments.

What do you need to get started?

The hardest part of adopting an eRx workflow is getting providers on board, not implementing the technology itself. In most cases, the technology already exists in the system. In fact, one report estimates that in 2021, 94% of all prescriptions filled in the U.S. were done so electronically.¹¹

Use these three tips to manage the transition:

Identify a champion who can advocate for vaccine eRx with leaders and peers.

Design the workflow to simplify the EHR experience for providers.

To encourage adoption, **track and share vaccination rates** alongside eRx usage by provider or department.

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