



Pharmacy innovations in e-health



Community pharmacy in Australia leads the way in terms of its willingness to adopt innovative technologies and strategies in its mission to offer the highest standard of pharmacy and health care services.

Whether those innovations are technological, systematic or strategic in nature, the Pharmacy Guild of Australia has developed the necessary infrastructure and culture to implement innovation quickly and in such a way as to deliver significant benefits to the public.

In the area of e-health, no other profession has done more than community pharmacy in terms of investing its own funds to support moves to the e-health model. Key examples of Pharmacy Guild e-health initiatives are outlined below.

Mirixa Australia - helping patients get the maximum benefit from their medicines

Mirixa Australia™ programs enable pharmacists to systematically implement medication related care programs for the benefit of patients and the health system.

Mirixa Australia is operated by healthlinks.net, a 100 per cent owned subsidiary of the Pharmacy Guild. Mirixa Australia and the Pharmacy Guild are dedicated to helping patients get the maximum benefit from their medicines. It achieves this aim by helping pharmacists guide patients to take the right medicines, at the right time, over the appropriate period – boosting patient compliance to their medicines and adherence to their treatment over time.

The Mirixa Australia™ programs help pharmacists:

- deliver targeted clinical services to patients
- help patients manage their medication use
- improve medication compliance, promote safety and control costs

The Mirixa Australia™ programs deliver comprehensive patient information and proactive clinical alerts to highlight potential opportunities for pharmacists to help patients with their medication - from education, to staying on their medication, to finding better health management alternatives.

eRx Script Exchange - an Australia-wide approach to improving patient care and safety

eRx Script Exchange is an industry-driven partnership designed to improve health outcomes for all Australians. Endorsed by the Pharmacy Guild and led by Australia's largest pharmacy software specialist Fred Health, it brings together expertise in the needs of patients, pharmacists,

GPs and medical practitioners, and e-health.

With over two hundred million scripts dispensed every year in Australia, and pharmacists dispensing on average 100-200 scripts a day, electronic prescriptions provide a significant opportunity to strengthen patient safety and confidence in dispensing medication.

How patients benefit from eRx Script Exchange

- Electronic prescribing strengthens patient safety and confidence, generating greater accuracy of dispensing and reducing risks associated with medication and dispensing
- It leads to a better experience for patients, as a result of improving coordination and management of patient care between GPs and pharmacies
- It preserves patient choice, ensuring that the patient can choose to go to any pharmacy for dispensing, and can choose to opt out of having notifications back to GPs
- It creates a better experience for patients in the pharmacy, as e-scripts are more efficient and more accurate to dispense

PBS Online – pharmacy shows its strength and ability in embracing IT

Online Claiming for Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) medicines offers an improved claiming solution by allowing pharmacies to submit a claim to Medicare Australia each time a PBS medicine is dispensed.

Online Claiming for PBS was piloted by a small number of pharmacies between 20 September 2004 and 20 December 2004 and was followed by an independent evaluation. Medicare Australia has now implemented the recommendations of the evaluation report and is rolling out Online Claiming for PBS to the wider pharmacy community.

- Over 98 per cent of prescriptions now go through PBS Online.
- Rollout went from four per cent of pharmacies to over 95 per cent of pharmacies within nine months of the Guild indicating to members that it was robust and workable and that an adequate financial incentive was available.
- PBS Online is a testament to the willingness and ability of community pharmacy to embrace new technologies where the Guild and dispensing software vendors are actively involved in their design and where appropriate remuneration is provided.
- Software vendors were crucial to the rollout of PBS online and, due to the online, real time nature of the system, they are now providing support for technical issues but are no longer funded to do so. These costs are being borne by pharmacies.

findapharmacy.com.au – helping customers find the pharmacy services they need

In early 2008, the Pharmacy Guild launched findapharmacy.com.au - a pharmacy locator service for its members.

Now customers are able to locate pharmacy premises, view opening hours, see what services are provided and even find out which languages are spoken within a pharmacy.

The findapharmacy.com.au service also enables patients to print out a map and driving instructions from their front door to the pharmacy. This is particularly useful for travellers who are seeking a pharmacy while on the road.