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National Patient Safety Initiative Launched To Provide Free Electronic Prescribing To Every Physician In America

Leading Healthcare and Technology Companies Join in Support of Initiative: Aetna, Allscripts, Cisco, Dell, Fujitsu, Google, Intel, Microsoft, Sprint Nextel, SureScripts, WellPoint, Wolters Kluwer Health

Washington, DC – Jan. 16, 2007 – A coalition of the nation’s most prominent technology companies and leading healthcare organizations announced today a national initiative to provide free electronic prescribing for every physician in America. The National ePrescribing Patient Safety InitiativeSM (NEPSISM) is the first nationwide effort to improve patient safety by offering a solution to the medication errors that harm millions of people each year.

Preventable medication errors injure at least 1.5 million Americans and claim more than 7,000 lives each year, according to a July 2006 study by the Institute of Medicine (IOM) of the National Academy of Sciences. In an effort to reduce these errors, the IOM has called on all of the nation’s physicians to adopt electronic prescribing by 2010.

“While medication errors and adverse drug events can be common and serious, electronic prescribing is clearly a tool that can dramatically reduce errors and improve patient safety,” said Nancy W. Dickey, currently President of the Health Science Center and Vice Chancellor for Health Affairs at the Texas A&M University System and formerly President of the American Medical Association. “Yet despite the many benefits of electronic prescribing, physician adoption is still modest. The situation calls for a solution that will overcome the barriers many physicians face in adopting this life-saving technology.”

The challenge, according to the eHealth Initiative, is that fewer than 1 in 5 of the nation’s practicing physicians currently process prescriptions electronically. Studies indicate that most physicians have been reluctant to adopt electronic prescribing largely because of the cost of the systems, and a perception that the technology requires too much time to learn and install.

NEPSI will help address those barriers by providing physicians simple, safe and secure electronic prescribing at no cost. NEPSI is led by Allscripts (Nasdaq: MDRX), the leading provider of clinical software, information and connectivity solutions that physicians use to improve healthcare, and by national sponsor Dell Computers, Inc. (Nasdaq: DELL), the world’s leading computer company. Other technology companies sponsoring NEPSI are Cisco Systems Corp., Fujitsu Computers of America, Inc., Google, Inc. – the coalition’s Search Sponsor – Microsoft, Corp., Sprint Nextel Corp., SureScripts, Inc., and Wolters Kluwer Health, Inc.

“Medication errors represent a significant challenge for our nation and we know we can and we must do better by taking action – right now,” said Glen Tullman, Chief Executive Officer of Allscripts. “The National e-Prescribing Patient Safety Initiative brings together a diverse group of

technology companies, payers and physicians who share a commitment to one remarkable idea – that providing free electronic prescribing for every physician will ultimately reduce errors and improve care. This initiative delivers a simple yet comprehensive solution, and represents an on-ramp to a complete Electronic Health Record.”

Kevin Rollins, President and Chief Executive Officer of Dell, NEPSI’s national sponsor, commented, “We are proud to add sponsorship of the NEPSI Coalition to the growing list of healthcare-related initiatives that Dell is helping to lead. Information technology holds great promise as a means to help upgrade our nation’s healthcare system, and we look forward to working with partners such as Allscripts to help demonstrate its potential to improve the quality, efficiency and productivity of healthcare in the America.”

In addition to Dell, a number of the largest technology companies in the world are sponsoring NEPSI including Microsoft and Intel.

“Microsoft is proud to support the NEPSI initiative, which we believe is a major step forward in the effort to arm our nation’s physicians with the technology they need to eliminate paper from the prescription process and deliver higher quality, safer patient care,” said Steve Shihadeh, General Manager of Sales, Marketing and Partners for Microsoft’s Health Solutions Group. “We believe that consumers will be the biggest beneficiaries of this technology adoption by physicians, enabling real-time access to the most relevant patient information”.

Craig Barrett, Intel Chairman, who recently announced an initiative with major employers to provide a personal health record system for their employees, commented, “Paper prescriptions are a key cause of cost, errors and inefficiency in U.S. health care. Which other industry could tell their customers it was OK to have a 15 percent error rate; imagine the airlines landing at the wrong destination 15 percent of the time. Electronic prescribing should be the rule not the exception. We look forward to working together with Allscripts and this initiative to lower health care costs and drive improvements, ultimately providing more timely and accurate information to our employees through direct feeds to the Dossia lifelong health record.”

A key element of the NEPSI initiative is participation by two of the nation’s largest health benefits companies, Aetna and WellPoint, as well as influential regional payers such as Horizon Blue Cross Blue Shield of New Jersey. The coalition’s health benefits sponsors will provide a range of incentives to physicians in their networks to encourage adoption and use of electronic prescribing technology. Their view is that electronic prescribing adds quality and efficiency to the patient care process.

“WellPoint views electronic prescribing as an essential tool in providing high-quality, safe and cost-effective care to our members,” said Charles Kennedy, M.D., Vice President of Health Information Technology for WellPoint. “We are excited about the potential of the NEPSI program to improve care when executed by our network physicians.”

To add local presence and expertise, NEPSI also includes more than a dozen of the most prestigious and leading academic medical centers, integrated delivery networks and physician groups representing thousands of physicians across the country. These organizations will serve as regional supporters of NEPSI, leading the delivery and support of electronic prescribing to physicians in their states and regions by providing education, training, incentives and local physician support.

Leading healthcare provider organizations acting as regional supporters of the NEPSI rollout of free electronic prescribing include: Advocate Health Partners, Mount Prospect, IL; Brown & Toland Medical Group, San Francisco, CA; Delta Health Alliance/University of Mississippi Medical Center, Stoneville, MS; George Washington University Medical Faculty Associates, Washington, DC; Healthcare Partners Medical Group, Torrance, CA; Holston Medical Group, Kingsport, TN; LSU Health Network, New Orleans, LA; MaineGeneral Health, Augusta, ME; Novant Health,

Winston-Salem, NC; Sierra Health Services and Southwest Medical Associates, Las Vegas, NV; UMass Memorial Healthcare, Worcester, MA; University of South Florida/USF Physicians Group, Tampa, FL.

The backbone of the NEPSI program is eRx NOW™, web-based software from Allscripts powered by the same engine used today by more than 20,000 physicians to write millions of electronic prescriptions each year. Designed to appeal to physicians in solo practice or small groups, eRx NOW™ is available free to any healthcare provider with legal authority to prescribe medications, and requires no download, no new hardware, and minimal training.

The product includes the ability to quickly generate secure electronic prescriptions that can be sent computer-to-computer or via electronic fax to 55,000 retail pharmacies – more than 95 percent of all U.S. pharmacies – via SureScripts. All prescriptions are instantly checked for potentially harmful interactions with a patient's other medications using a real-time complete medication database provided by Wolters Kluwer Health, as well as real-time notification of insurance formulary status from leading payers, plans and pharmacy benefit managers. The product also includes the ability for physicians to search and find targeted health-related information for themselves or patients using a custom search engine from Google. The NEPSI Custom Search Engine was created for medical professionals and enables those using the eRx Now™ product to get search results tailored for the medical community.

eRx NOW™ offers physicians and patients the highest levels of security available, with multiple redundant layers of firewall, deep-packet inspection, SSL encryption, database encryption, intrusion detection and virus, spyware and malware protection for the program's remote servers. To ensure patient privacy, all patient information is stored on remote servers in a secure location, so information cannot be compromised even if a physician's computer or phone is stolen.

Interested physicians can visit the NEPSI web site, www.nationaleRx.com to register for the program. The solution is currently being used by physicians and will begin national deployment within 30 days.

ABOUT NEPSI

The National ePrescribing Patient Safety Initiative (NEPSI) is a coalition of the nation's most prominent technology companies and leading healthcare organizations dedicated to improving patient safety by providing free access to simple, safe and secure electronic prescribing for every physician in America. The coalition is led by Allscripts (Nasdaq: MDRX) and national sponsor Dell, Inc. (Nasdaq: DELL); and includes Aetna, Inc., Cisco Systems, Inc., Fujitsu Computers of America, Inc., Google, Inc., Microsoft, Corp., Sprint Nextel, Inc., SureScripts, Inc., WellPoint, Inc., and Wolters Kluwer Health, Inc.

The NEPSI offering also is supported by a growing number of academic medical centers, integrated delivery networks and physician groups across the U.S., who are leading the rollout of the NEPSI electronic prescribing solution, eRx NOW™, within their states and regions. For more information, visit NEPSI on the web at www.nationaleRx.com.