

MASSACHUSETTS BOARD OF REGISTRATION IN PHARMACY

*Newsletter to Promote Pharmacy
and Drug Law Compliance.*

E-Prescribing

E-prescribing went into effect in 2021, but what exactly does that mean for pharmacies? How is an e-prescription defined? Can you still fill paper or oral prescriptions? What about faxes?

There are several exceptions to the e-prescribing requirement, including veterinary, [Schedule VI](#), and prescriptions issued during a technology or electrical failure. The full list of exceptions can be found in [105 Code of Massachusetts Regulations \(CMR\) 721.070](#).

To address these exceptions, a pharmacist may dispense an otherwise valid written or oral prescription without verifying that an exception applies.

An e-prescription is defined as one that is electronically transmitted from a prescribing system to a pharmacy system, both of which must meet federal security requirements. The associated signature is also electronically validated in the transmission

process. Under this definition, a fax is not considered an e-prescription and should be handled as a written prescription.

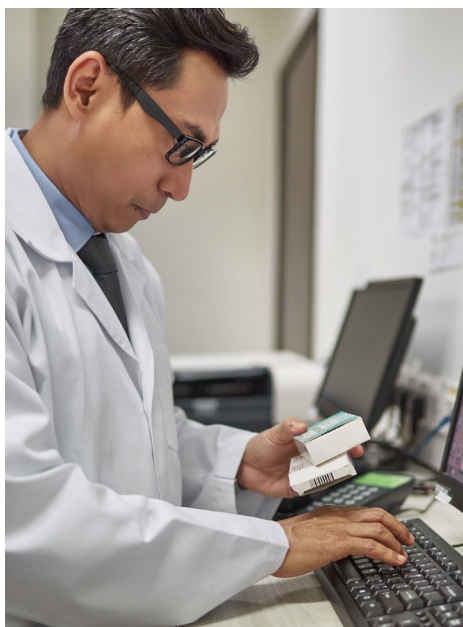
If you receive a paper printout of an e-prescription, it is now considered a written prescription and must bear the prescriber's handwritten signature (also known as a wet signature) to be valid. In the absence of a handwritten signature, you can call the prescriber to verify and then accept it as an oral prescription.

Oral prescriptions are valid and acceptable; however, prescriptions for federally controlled medications will still need a written follow-up or e-prescription from the prescriber. The follow-up prescriptions must contain the notation, "Issued to Document an Oral Prescription" (or "Authorization for Emergency Dispensing," in the case of a Schedule II) and be received by the pharmacy within seven business days.

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E-Prescribing

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If a prescriber chooses to e-prescribe a Schedule VI medication and the prescription fails to transmit properly, resulting in a computer-generated fax, a pharmacist may dispense the medication (except for gabapentin) as if it were a valid oral prescription. It would be considered an oral prescription because, as a failed e-prescription, it would not contain a valid prescriber's signature.

Please remember that the regulations specifically **allow a pharmacist to dispense any otherwise valid written or oral prescription** to prevent delays in patient therapy. See [105 CMR 721.070\(C\)](#) for that specific allowance and review the rest of the regulation for more information on e-prescribing, prescription format, and security.

Renewal of Pharmacy Licenses

Since all pharmacy licenses will expire on December 31, 2025, renewal applications will become available on October 2. As mandated by state law, the renewal

application will require licensed compounding pharmacies to provide a list of all compounds that have been dispensed into, within, or from Massachusetts from

October 1 through September 30 of this year, ie, October 1, 2024, through September 30, 2025, for this renewal year.

Getting to Know Your Board Members – Saad Dinno

Since 2024, Saad Dinno, RPh, FACP/FACA, has served as one of the two independent pharmacists on the Massachusetts Board of Registration in Pharmacy. He currently serves as president-elect. Taking care of people was Saad's primary reason for pursuing a career in pharmacy. Watching his pharmacist father care for his patients and seeing the trusting relationship he built with not only his customer base but also with

the providers, Saad was inspired to follow in his footsteps. Today, Saad and his brother co-own five pharmacies in the Boston area, carrying on the family tradition of independently owned pharmacies. Since 1997, he has primarily practiced in their Acton, MA location.

Saad has always been a proponent of innovative pharmacy practices and has been involved with various pharmacy organizations.

The Board's mission to protect public health and serve patients, combined with his desire to help shape the regulatory framework of pharmacy practice, inspired Saad to become a Board member.

While he anticipated the challenges of balancing multiple viewpoints, he has been pleasantly surprised by the collaborative spirit among members and staff. Saad appreciates learning other viewpoints that lead to thoughtful

Getting to Know Your Board Members – Saad Dinno

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discussion and a collaborative outcome. Every discussion has deepened his understanding of the nuanced interplay between regulation and practice.

Saad feels that some of the Board's most pressing challenges include keeping pace with technological advancements, managing workforce shortages, and maintaining high standards for medication safety amid the changing regulatory landscape. These issues require not only technical and clinical insights but also a forward-thinking approach to policymaking.

Because he stays well-informed from his interactions with pharmacy organizations and the Board, Saad's pharmacy staff can practice on the cutting edge

of change. He likes to think that his patients and customers have benefited from him being up to date with new and better pharmacy practices.

"I'm driven by an unwavering commitment to excellence, both in the practice of pharmacy and in the service of our community," Saad said. "I see my role on the Board as a way to give back to the profession I love and admire, ensuring that we all work within a framework that prioritizes safety, innovation, and compassionate care. Our patients need us."

Saad concluded with a message to the wider pharmacy community. "To all my pharmacist colleagues, students, interns, and technicians: Embrace lifelong learning and remain steadfast in your

commitment to patient care," he said. "Never underestimate the power of staying curious, seeking mentorship, and taking an active role in shaping the future of our profession. Get involved, whether through the many pharmacy organizations that serve the branch of pharmacy you practice in, mentorship (eg, being a preceptor), advocacy, or serving on the board of pharmacy. It is we, together, who dictate how we are going to move this profession forward and into the future. Your efforts today are the foundation for a safer, more innovative tomorrow. Change is inevitable; we all have to embrace it, but you have a voice and ability to drive that change as well."



Did You Know?

- Ever wonder if there is a good overview document of federal laws? Check out the [Drug Enforcement Administration Pharmacist's Manual](#).
- The Board has several policy and guidance documents for **sterile and nonsterile** compounders that can be found on its [Pharmacy Practice Resources](#) page.
- Review this [reporting overview](#) to help determine what needs reporting, when to report, and how to do it.
- Take advantage of a **free, 1-credit CE program** offered by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, titled [Responsive Practice: Providing Health Care and Screenings to Individuals with Disabilities](#).

Board Members

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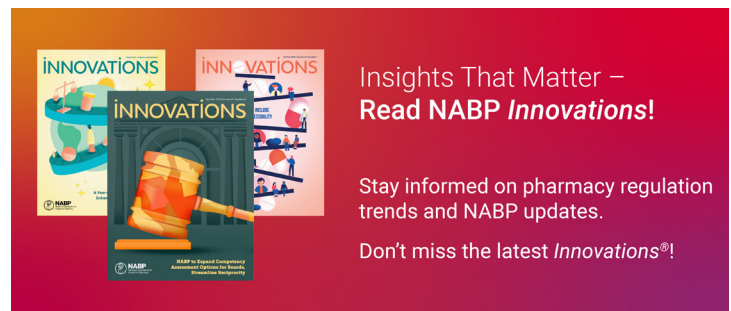
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