Safe-Rx™ Awards Frequently Asked Questions

What are the Safe-Rx Awards?

The Safe-Rx Awards celebrate leadership and exceptional commitment to advancing health care safety, efficiency and quality through the use of e-prescribing. The Awards recognize the top 10 states in the nation with the highest rates of e-prescribing and offer a full ranking of state e-prescribing performance (including for the District of Columbia) based on use of all three critical services that constitute electronic prescribing: Prescription Benefit, Medication History and Prescription Routing.

Because the Awards are based on a ranking that measures states’ actual use of e-prescribing, they have been referenced as a proxy for states’ meaningful use of electronic health records. For more information about the Safe-Rx Awards, please visit our Safe-Rx Web page at www.surescripts.com/Safe-Rx.

Who created the Safe-Rx Awards?

Surescripts created the Safe-Rx Awards to raise awareness of e-prescribing as a means of enhancing patient safety by providing a more secure, accurate and informed prescribing process.

The Safe-Rx Awards reflect Surescripts’ long-standing collaboration with the nation’s pharmacies, payers, physicians and technology vendors to support the exchange of health information over a network that is noncommercial, neutral, transparent and standards-based.

Who were the winners of the most recent Safe-Rx Awards?

The Fifth Annual Safe-Rx Awards were announced on September 21, 2010, at the Senate Hart Office Building in Washington, D.C. Surescripts CEO Harry Totonis presented awards to the top 10 states:

Top 10 E-Prescribing States

1. Massachusetts
2. Michigan
3. Rhode Island
4. Delaware
5. North Carolina
6. Connecticut
7. Pennsylvania
8. Hawaii*
9. Indiana*
10. Florida*

*New to the top 10
What is the Safe-Rx Evangelist Award?
The Safe-Rx Evangelist Award goes to a single person or organization whose work has made an extraordinary impact on the awareness and use of e-prescribing as a critical means of reducing medication errors.

In 2010, this Award was given to Senator Sheldon Whitehouse of Rhode Island. In 2009, the Safe-Rx Evangelist Award went to Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts. In 2008, the Safe-Rx Evangelist Award went to Health and Human Services Secretary Michael Leavitt. In 2007, the Safe-Rx Evangelist Award went to the Institute of Medicine for its breakthrough report, Preventing Medication Errors.

What does the name “Safe-Rx” stand for?
The award name speaks to one of the main benefits of electronic prescribing: increased patient safety through more accurate prescribing — the “Safe” and “SafeR” in “Safe-Rx.” The phrasing of the award also incorporates electronic prescribing representation — the “e-Rx” in “Safe-Rx.”

The Safe-Rx Award logo design incorporates the familiar pharmacy “Rx” symbol with a “strike out” graphic to symbolize safer prescribing through the elimination of paper-based prescriptions.

How do you calculate the state rankings?
Safe-Rx rankings are based on an equal-weight analysis of prescription benefit, medication history and prescription routing transactions within each state and the District of Columbia during the previous calendar year. Each of these transaction types reflects the three critical steps in the electronic prescribing process:

1. **Prescription Benefit:** Electronically confirming a patient’s prescription benefit information prior to sending the e-prescription to help avoid inefficiency and inconvenience by sharing and confirming health plan coverage before e-prescriptions are sent. Ultimately, this helps reduce cost and the risk of medication errors.

2. **Medication History:** Electronically accessing patient medication history from pharmacies and payers to help decrease the chance of potentially harmful drug-to-drug interactions and medication errors and to inform safe prescribing decisions.

3. **Prescription Routing:** Electronically routing a prescription to the patient’s choice of pharmacy to help improve safety by eliminating illegible handwriting. It also helps improve the speed and efficiency of prescription delivery. New prescriptions often arrive at the pharmacy before the patient leaves the doctor’s office. Prescription renewals can be electronically routed, reviewed and approved — saving time and money for physicians and pharmacies.

This approach recognizes the combined role that prescription benefit, medication history and prescription routing play in improving the overall safety, efficiency, cost and quality of the prescribing process, and reflects electronic prescribing’s place as a key component of “meaningful use” requirements under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

For a full description of the ranking methodology, go to www.surescripts.com/safe-rx and download the “Fifth Annual Ranking Criteria” document.
Where can I find out how my state finished if it did not make the top 10?

Rankings for all 50 states and the District of Columbia may be found at the Safe-Rx Awards Web site at www.surescripts.com/safe-rx. The Web site also contains a detailed progress report on each state’s e-prescribing progress at www.surescripts.com/stats. This includes:

- Measurements of e-prescribing use and adoption from 2007 through 2009
- Prescription benefit, medication history and prescription routing transaction volumes
- The status of e-prescribing participation by physicians and pharmacies
- The organizations in each state of the top 10 Safe-Rx states that have been recognized as “key contributors” in driving e-prescribing adoption and use

How can my state improve its ranking?

To learn more about what you can do and what others are doing to drive improvements in the safety and efficiency of the prescribing process, please contact Kate Berry, Senior Vice President of Stakeholder Relations – Surescripts at kate.berry@surescripts.com.

Why are the Safe-Rx Awards so popular?

There are three reasons why the Safe-Rx Awards and state rankings have attracted such wide-scale attention from members of industry, government and press-related organizations.

First, the Safe-Rx and state rankings are one of a kind: They are the only objective measure of nationwide and state-level health IT adoption in the U.S. and have been referenced as a proxy for states’ meaningful use of electronic health records.

Second, governors and other public and health officials have embraced the Safe-Rx Awards. In the first two years, we have held statehouse events with the governors of the No. 1 e-prescribing states — at the statehouse in Providence, Rhode Island, in 2006; and in 2007, at the statehouse in Boston. In 2009, Tennessee Governor Phil Bredesen and Vermont Governor Jim Douglas hosted the Safe-Rx Awards at an event in Washington, D.C.

Last, the annual state ranking and Safe-Rx Awards have spawned a “healthy competition” among states.