



Governor Signs Bill Advancing E-Technology in Healthcare Field

L.A. Care-Sponsored Bill Promotes Use of Electronic Prescribing to Reduce Medication Errors

Los Angeles, October 3, 2006 — A bill designed to reduce the number of serious medical errors caused by often hard-to-read handwritten prescriptions was signed into law by Governor Schwarzenegger. AB 225, which was sponsored by L.A. Care Health Plan and carried by Assemblymember Gloria Negrete McLeod (D-Pomona), promotes the use of electronic prescribing by medical doctors and other health care professionals. Specifically, AB 225 directs the Secretary of the State Health and Human Services Agency to promulgate regulations conforming State law to new Federal regulations, which allow certain hospitals, medical groups, and other entities to provide hardware and software to healthcare providers for the purpose of electronic prescribing without violating anti-kickback laws.

Electronic prescribing, or e-prescribing, includes activities such as the use of PDA-like devices to communicate drug prescriptions directly to a patient's pharmacist. E-prescribing eliminates the need for often illegible handwritten prescriptions and the serious errors that they sometimes cause.

E-prescribing can help prevent medication errors because each prescription can be electronically checked at the time of prescribing for dosage, interactions with other medications, and therapeutic duplication.

Health information technology is recognized as one of the most promising paths to improving health care quality and safety, as well as moderating the increase in health care costs in California and throughout the nation.

AB 225 enjoyed bipartisan support in the state Legislature, and is the only bill dealing directly with health information technology that was signed by the Governor in 2006. It is also consistent with the Governor's Executive Order addressing the development of health information technology.

About L.A. Care Health Plan

L.A. Care Health Plan (Local Initiative Health Authority of Los Angeles County) is a local public agency and health plan serving residents of Los Angeles County through a variety of programs including Medi-Cal, Healthy Families, and Healthy Kids. With nearly 800,000 enrolled members, L.A. Care is the nation's largest public health plan. L.A. Care is a leader in developing new programs through innovative coalitions and partnerships designed to support public health, the safety net, and health insurance coverage for vulnerable populations. For more information, please visit www.lacare.org.