

Information for Toniq Pharmacies about the New Zealand Electronic Prescription Service (NZePS)



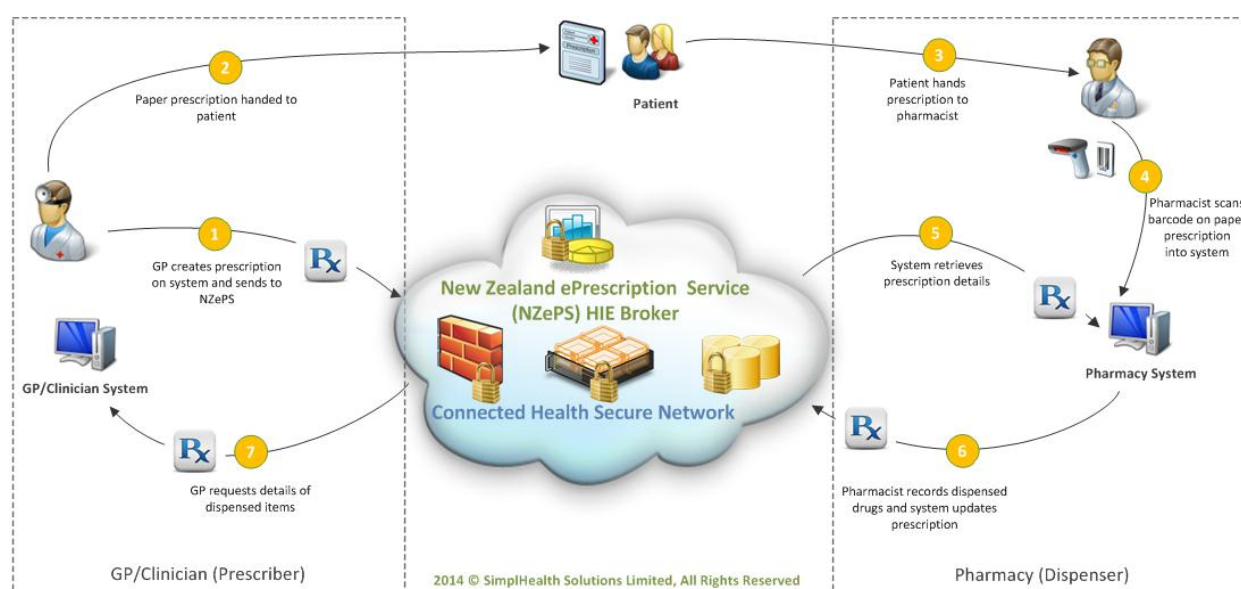
IT HEALTH
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June 2014

The New Zealand ePrescription Service (NZePS) is being rolled out across the country. It allows a community pharmacy to retrieve an electronic version of a prescription given to a patient.

Prescriptions taken into a pharmacy by a patient include a printed barcode. The barcode is scanned to download the electronic version from NZePS, as shown below.



The prescription also features the Connected Health logo. The logo confirms NZePS meets Ministry of Health standards for the exchange of personal health information.

Prescriptions without a barcode (or those with barcodes that can't be scanned or fetched) can be processed as usual. Once a pharmacy is connected, all processed prescriptions will be sent to NZePS. The pharmacy system also sends electronic records of phone prescriptions to the NZePS service.

NZePS can help to improve medicines safety and patient health outcomes, and may allow pharmacists to work more efficiently and to spend more time on patients.

The service was introduced to support better management of prescription and dispensing processes in the community, and is a top priority for the National IT Plan. NZePS delivers some immediate benefits but, most importantly, it provides a foundation for more benefits to be introduced as the service is enhanced.

For more information on NZePS, see the FAQs on the next page.

1 What does it cost?

There is no charge to patients, prescribers and pharmacies to send or retrieve electronic prescriptions.

The service uses the same network as Online Pharmacy Claiming, NHI and Electronic Special Authority enquiries, and has been designed to keep internet usage low.

2 What are the benefits?

Current benefits of NZePS include:

- faster processing of some prescriptions. Pharmacies report saving time by using demographic details and other information entered by the prescriber. Medicines entered in the prescription that can be matched in the dispensing system will save manual entry, while ongoing refinement of the prescriber and pharmacy systems will improve accuracy and efficiency.

Future benefits include:

- electronic prescriptions for controlled drugs will no longer need to be handwritten on the triplicate controlled drug form
- prescribers will be able to note the reason for prescribing or make other comments at the time of prescribing (for example, to clarify an unusual dosing or period of supply). The note will not be shown on the printed prescription, but will be sent as part of the electronic prescription and will be visible to the pharmacist when the prescription is being processed. This should reduce the need to contact prescribers
- prescribers will be able to electronically acknowledge unsigned prescriptions – such as phone scripts and aged care facility charts – and pharmacists' changes to prescriptions. The patient record will also be updated, improving accuracy
- better access to medicines information. As portals become more widely available, prescribers and other healthcare professionals will be able to access information about medicines prescribed and dispensed for a patient from anywhere in New Zealand
- improved information for determining patient entitlements, such as PSC, and real-time reporting to monitor suspicious behaviour or potential misuse
- improved anonymised information to identify opportunities to reduce compliance costs, improve efficiencies and support new service models
- more efficient payment processes.

3 Is NZePS information secure?

Information is transmitted to and from NZePS by the secure health network Connected Health.

Digital certificates ensure a site is authorised to access NZePS. Electronic prescriptions and dispensing details are also encrypted when sent to the system.

4 What information is in the barcode?

The barcode on a paper prescription is a unique number that contains no other information.

5 Are all prescriptions dispensed sent to NZePS?

All 'medicine' prescriptions and related dispensing details are sent to NZePS, regardless of subsidy status. Prescription items related to 'fees' are not sent.

Information is sent to NZePS to:

- give health professionals a more accurate view of patients' medications to support clinical decision-making and improve patient safety
- provide information to help assess entitlements eligibility, such as reduced patient co-payments
- help identify opportunities to reduce compliance costs, improve efficiencies and support new service models.

6 Who can access NZePS information?

Currently, prescription information can be accessed by the prescriber and the pharmacy system that created or retrieved the prescription.

In the future:

- health care professionals will be able to access patient-identifiable information through approved portals with strict access controls
- information used for non-clinical purposes will be de-identified (NHI encrypted).

7 Is patient information provided to manufacturers or advertisers?

No.

8 How long does prescription information remain on NZePS?

Electronic prescriptions are no longer accessible via NZePS three months after they expire.

Information accessed via approved portals is subject to specific access policies and is expected to be available long term.

9 Does a pharmacy have to wait to connect to NZePS until barcoded prescriptions are presented?

Pharmacies can connect to NZePS even if local GP practices are not using electronic prescribing. The electronic dispensing record will still be sent to NZePS.

10 What happens if a barcoded prescription cannot be retrieved from NZePS?

A message saying the pharmacy system cannot 'fetch' the prescription means the system has successfully connected to NZePS but cannot find the electronic record matching the scanned barcode. There are various potential reasons for this problem, but they are not related to the pharmacy system.

11 What set-up is required?

The pharmacy vendor sets up the NZePS system, which involves:

- a software update
- registration of the pharmacy on the NZePS
- loading the pharmacy digital certificate for eprescribing
- a final test to ensure everything is working as it should be.

Most of the work can be done without taking the system down. If a restart is required, the vendor will schedule it with the pharmacy.

12 How can problems with NZePS be resolved?

Pharmacists who experience a problem with NZePS can revert to processing prescriptions manually. If they wish to report the problem, they can email or call their pharmacy vendor. Pharmacists should note any relevant error messages, which will indicate the source of the problem.

To contact Tonic, email support@toniq.co.nz or phone 03 341 0195.

13 NZePS governance

NZePS has been governed by a steering group made up of stakeholder representatives.

As NZePS is rolled out across New Zealand, an operational group has been set up to ensure the service continues to meet the need of stakeholders. The group is made up of consumers and representatives from community pharmacy, general practice, district health boards, the National Health IT Board, the Ministry of Health and the Health Quality & Safety Commission.

