

COVID-19 Update to Members

June 2020

Healthmail Prescribing changes during COVID-19

Introduction

With a need to reduce the footfall through GP surgeries and Pharmacy shops, there have been legislative procedures enacted to enable smoother transmission of prescriptions between Pharmacy and General Practice. The changes have been welcomed by GPs by removing the need for traditional Dot-matrix printing. The current processes are temporary and will, in time, be replaced with the HSE ePrescribing project.

Processes Involved

Up until legislation changes became enacted on 3rd April 2020 all prescriptions had to be signed by the prescriber. Through collaboration between the Department of Health, the PCRS, IMO, GPIT, the IPU and the PSI, there was an agreement to utilise the HSE Healthmail as a method of prescription transfer.

By using Healthmail, the prescribing information is retained on HSE infrastructure with secure recording and retention of the prescription in its transfer. It is easy to follow the prescription process from the prescriber to the pharmacist. This information is retained in the practice management software and it is clear to see if a script was printed off or emailed.

There was much work undertaken by all the software vendors to ensure that the Healthmail prescription transfer satisfied the legislation changes.

The current modules allow administration staff to create the prescription, but the clinician still must email the script. This process also improves GPs' ability to review the items in the patient's repeat prescription list, ensuring greater accuracy of the list. It also enables easy access to clinical notes ensuring appropriate clinical safeguards are in place for certain medications.

Healthmail accounts are free to practices. GPs should not charge patients for using this facility, however they may charge private patients for preparing repeat prescriptions, as normal.

In the future, a national ePrescribing system will come into place replacing Healthmail prescription transfer. The main visible change from this system would be to remove the pharmacy choice from the GP's decision process. The prescriptions will be forwarded electronically to an online medication repository, and patients can collect items in whole or in part from any pharmacy. In addition to this, all GPs will use an agreed national formulary, which should make future prescribing easier, and fix anomalies with current repeat prescriptions. It is hoped to move to full ePrescribing without reverting to dot-matrix printers.

Fields must be present for a Healthmail Prescription to be valid

If you are using Healthmail to send prescriptions outside of integrated software, there are components of the prescription that must be present to maintain the legality of the script.

- The prescription image must show the date, patients name, address, GMS number (if applicable).
- The items to be dispensed, in both quantity and the dosing schedule. (Words and numbers where required for controlled drugs)
- The script should indicate if single or repeat script (up to nine months)
- Must contain the name, address, contact number and IMC number of the prescriber. These can default into the signature of Healthmail

The accredited GP softwares should do the above automatically.

Further guidance and support on Healthmail prescription transfer:

The IMO, HSE and PSI agreed on document on Prescription changes: [Guidance for prescribers and pharmacists](#)

Emergency Prescribing Act 2020: [Emergency Measures in the Public Interest \(Covid-19\) Act 2020](#)

Healthmail Signup and Support, available at <https://www.healthmail.ie>

Irish College of General Practitioners COVID-19 advice, available at: <https://www.icgp.ie/covid19>

Further guidance and support on Healthmail prescription transfer from GP software:

Socrates

[Socrates Healthmail prescription guide](#)

[Socrates Healthmail prescription Webinar](#)

HPM

[Quick guide sending prescriptions using Healthmail](#)

HealthOne

[HealthOne User Guides](#)

[HealthOne email prescriptions video](#)

CompleteGP

[CompleteGP User Guide](#)

Healthmail Support

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Practice Management Software (Technical Support)

<u>System</u>	<u>e-mail:</u>	<u>Telephone:</u>
Socrates	support@clanwilliamhealth.com	(071) 9193600
HealthOne & HPM	gpsupport@clanwilliamhealth.com	(01) 4633098
Complete GP	support@completegp.ie	(01) 2150292

FAQs (from Healthmail prescription transfer during COVID-19)

1. Can I issue methadone prescriptions using Healthmail?

Unfortunately no. The OST prescription still must be signed and sent off. There is an option to scan the order when signed. It can then be sent as an attachment using Healthmail.

2. Can I send prescriptions using Healthmail when working in the OOH?

Work is underway to try to bring in a prescribing module into the Adastra and Valentia Tech programs (the software used in the OOH centers), as well as incorporating eReferral, to enable COVID-19 swab ordering. In the interim, you can log into your Healthmail account from a web browser and write out a prescription using the fields listed above, then send a Healthmail generated order to a pharmacy

3. We are using the eScript from Clanwilliam- Why do we have to follow up with the signed paper script?

As eScript messages travel on software not under the direct control of the HSE, then they cannot be used for prescription transfer. The process can be used to notify a pharmacy that a prescription is on the way but will have to be followed up with a signed prescription within seventy-two hours.

4. Am I limited to how many items I can prescribe and for how many repeat prescriptions to be issued?

With GMS paper prescriptions, you were limited to 8 items per sheet, and a maximum of three-months per prescription. All prescriptions, both GMS and private, can now be issued at the Pharmacist's discretion for nine months. Prescriptions are now valid for nine months also.

5. Are the PCRS using the information in Healthmail prescriptions to monitor my prescribing habits?

The Healthmail email is shared only between the GP and Pharmacist—the Pharmacist prints out the email to send to the PCRS for dispensing payment. The PCRS can then use this information to monitor prescribing, as was the case with the traditional paper GMS script.

6. Do I have to use my personal Healthmail Address?

If using software adapted to using Healthmail prescriptions, then it does not matter if you use your personal or practice Healthmail account when sending the script. As the

prescriber will be retained in the software and it will be clear from the transmitted prescription who sent off the order.

7. We do not use accredited software. Can we use Healthmail for prescription transfer?

Yes, you have a few choices. You can print off and sign the prescription and send it to the Pharmacist as a scanned pdf document. Alternatively, you can get a print preview of the prescription then take a screen pinch (WINDOWS+SHIFT+S), screen pinch is used to take a photo of the order and paste into the body of the Healthmail.