



## Media release

24 September 2020

### Electronic prescriptions available throughout Victoria following success in Greater Melbourne

All Victorians will soon have access to electronic prescriptions as they are made available to the entire state beyond the initial rollout in Greater Melbourne.

There has been significant uptake of electronic prescriptions since they were made available across Greater Melbourne in August. Since then more than 34,000 electronic prescriptions have been received by patients in Melbourne from around 1000 prescribers and 600 community pharmacies.

Nationally, more than 100,000 electronic prescriptions have been written since May when the Australian Digital Health Agency started implementing the new technology as a way to support Australians during COVID-19.

If a patient prefers to receive an electronic prescription rather than paper from their doctor, they will receive an SMS or email. The patient then sends or takes this to their pharmacy of choice.

The SMS or email contains a token that unlocks the electronic prescription from a secure, encrypted electronic prescription delivery service. Once scanned, the token allows the pharmacist to see and then dispense the prescription.

“The introduction of electronic prescriptions in COVID-19 lockdown Melbourne has been especially timely,” said Dr Steven Kaye, a busy Melbourne general practitioner. “Electronic prescriptions provide a new, secure convenience for both patients and GPs. Electronic scripts support my work, especially for telehealth consultations, and patients are responding positively. The immediacy of obtaining their prescription token on their mobile phone or email has been really well received by my patients.”

Australian Digital Health Agency Interim CEO Bettina McMahon said “When it became clear in March that COVID-19 was going to significantly impact the way Australians receive health services, we held a number of urgent meetings with technology providers and medical groups. Everyone was enthusiastic to speed up innovation to make prescriptions available electronically and many people worked tirelessly for months to make this happen.”

“From the first electronic prescription in May, we tested the system in over 20 locations across Australia which gave us confidence that we were ready to do this in August across the whole of Melbourne. We’re thrilled that all Victorians will soon have access to electronic prescriptions, with the rest of Australia to follow.”

“Technology in health has never been more prevalent, from having access to your health records in one secure place, to telehealth consultations via phone or computer and now electronic prescriptions.”

“Electronic prescriptions have always made sense – they are stored securely, are available online and via mobile phone and they reduce paperwork while still giving the consumer choice about which pharmacy they go to. They also support the current and future use of telehealth and ensure continuity of healthcare during public health emergencies such as COVID-19,” said Ms McMahon.

People should check with their pharmacy to make sure they are ready to dispense electronic prescriptions.



## Media contact

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## About the Australian Digital Health Agency

The Agency is tasked with improving health outcomes for all Australians through the delivery of digital healthcare systems, and implementing [Australia's National Digital Health Strategy](#) – *Safe, Seamless, and Secure: evolving health and care to meet the needs of modern Australia* in collaboration with partners across the community. The Agency is the System Operator of [My Health Record](#), and provides leadership, coordination, and delivery of a collaborative and innovative approach to utilising technology to support and enhance a clinically safe and connected national health system. These improvements will give individuals more control of their health and their health information, and support healthcare providers to deliver informed healthcare through access to current clinical and treatment information. Further information: [www.digitalhealth.gov.au](http://www.digitalhealth.gov.au).