Appropriate and Inappropriate Use of the 'Notes to Pharmacy' Field

07/08/2024 7:47 pm EDT

Within the National Council for Prescription Drug Programs (NCPDP) SCRIPT v10.6 standard for e-prescribing, a custom note can be sent to the pharmacist/ pharmacy personnel using the Notes field. This field is designed to convey information to the pharmacist/ pharmacy personnel only and should not contain redundant or conflicting information that has already been entered in any of the other designated fields within your prescription writer software.

The receipt of redundant or conflicting information in the Notes field can cause ambiguity and confusion that may result in pharmacy workflow disruptions, physician callbacks for clarification, and/or potential patient safety risks.

Inappropriate use of the Notes field includes information that already has a structured and codified field within the e-prescription message, for example, patient directions, either supplemental or conflicting. This can lead to critical information not being conveyed to the patient.

Examples of inappropriate Notes content include:

Type of Inappropriate Notes Content	Example
Patient	"PT XXX will pick up – DOB: XX-XX-XX"
Prescriber	"Prescribed by: Dr. XYZ NPI: 123456789"
Pharmacy	"Send to: XXXX Pharmacy; 123 XYZ Street"
Drug Name/Description	"Metoprolol Tartrate 50 mg oral tablet", "Twisthaler"
Directions for the Patient	"Take as directed by AC Clinic", "follow up after course"
Diagnosis or Indication	"Benign Hypertension", "GOUT", "401.9"
Quantity or Quantity Qualifier/Potency Unit Code	"QS for 3 Bottle", "Dispense: #5", "C48540"
Days' Supply	"#90 days", "Days: 1 month's supply"
Dispense as Written	"DAW 1", "Dispense the Brand only"
Refill Quantity	"Remaining Refills: 2", "REF: 1+3"

The Notes field should only include information to the pharmacist that does not already have structured fields designated for such information, so long as it does not conflict with information sent in other structured fields.

Examples of Appropriate Notes content include:

Type of Appropriate Notes Content	Example(s)
Mail order bridge, vacation, lost, stolen, replacement supply	"This is another 90 tabs for a vacation override." "Additional amount - pills were destroyed."
Label in patient's preferred language	"Chinese label please", "Label - patient speaks Spanish"
Expedited pick-up time; inform patient when ready	"FILL ASAP please - inform patient to pick-up."
Deliver this prescription	"Please deliver to patient today", "Delivery home clinic"
Counsel patient on therapy, indication, use, and other related information	"Please advise patient not to drink alcohol while taking this medication. Thanks"
Patient Allergy Notification/Alert to Pharmacy	"Ok, has had amoxicillin without reaction", "myalgias with statins"
Place Rx on hold/ do not dispense until later date	"** DO NOT FILL UNTIL XX-XX-XXXX"
Patient needs appointment/office visit/labs	"ADVISE PT NEEDS CHECKUP"
Change in therapy or Increase/Decrease in dose	"changing from capsule to XR tablets", "Change from Simvastatin"
Flavor this medication (with specific flavor)	"May add flavoring, preferably bubble gum"
One for home and one for school/other location	"Please give 1 for school and 1 for home"
Dispense the medication/quantity/product per patient preference	"Patient would like to receive a 90-day supply. Thank you.", "Patient prefers only XYZ manufacturer brand."
Number of Prescriptions in Batch	"#2 rx", "1 OF 3", "Rx #1 of 2"
Other related information intended for the pharmacist without a structured field	"Brand Medically Necessary", "SIG calculated with weight: 9.13 kg and a target does of 1 mg/kg/dose"

Below are the Surescripts application certification requirements (ACR) that address the appropriate use of the Notes field: On a New Rx, the notes going into the message shall*106R-134 be labeled as "Notes to Pharmacist" or something similar on the user screen.

It shall*106R-187 be clear that data passed in the 210-character Notes field will not be shared with the patient. Prescription information that has a designated, standardized data field within the NCPDP script standard shall*106R-175 not be entered into the "Notes to Pharmacist" field. Some Examples: SIG, Effective Date, Drug Name, Strength, or Quantity.

In order to optimize workflow efficiency and improve patient care and safety, please ensure your systems and end-users adopt and adhere to the guidelines explained above.