

# Practice Profiles on Electronic Prescribing



For a relatively new physician like **Dr. Rebecca Andrews**, the clinical decision support capabilities embedded in her e-prescribing system provide “an invaluable teaching tool, for both prescribers and patients.”

“Prompted by automatic alerts, I don’t have to worry about missing a potentially dangerous drug-drug or drug-allergy interaction,” she says. “For example, patients who are taking both anti-depressants and certain chronic pain medications may face an increased risk of seizures.”

Meanwhile, the ability to manage all new and refill prescriptions in an electronic format reduces errors and helps improve care in other ways, such as the potential misspelling of drug names. “There are so many drugs in use today, and their names are so complicated for patients,” says Dr. Andrews. “Sometimes we literally couldn’t figure out what medication the patient was even calling for.” By contrast, with the e-prescribing system, “you just start typing and the system automatically gives you all possible drug names and the various formats and dosage options.”

## IMPROVING DRUG ADHERENCE

Similarly, because the EMR system maintains a record of patient medication history, Dr. Andrews can have more meaningful discussions with her patients, helping to affect drug adherence. “we can also watch for problems,” says Dr. Andrews. For instance, “If a patient asks for a refill they just got 10 days ago, we know they are either taking their medication inappropriately or sharing it with others.”

When it comes to other practices considering implementing an e-prescribing system, Dr. Andrews offers this advice: “Speak with local pharmacies early on, and work as a community team to solve issues.”

“We experienced a lot of problems in the beginning, mainly because many of the local pharmacies weren’t ready to handle prescriptions that were coming in electronically, and this led to a lot of frustration — for our patients and for us — that the system wasn’t

*“Without a doubt, electronic prescribing is the best part of our EMR system.”*

— Dr. Andrews

## PRACTICE STATS

### Rebecca Andrews, M.D.



*from left to right: Rita Sobieraj LPN, Rebecca Andrews MD, Carol Rivera MA*

- ▶ In practice for 2 years
- ▶ Practice name and specialties: Community Health Center (New Britain, Conn.) — Internal Medicine, Family Practice, Pediatrics
- ▶ Prescribing system used: eClinicalWorks electronic medical record (EMR)
- ▶ Number of prescribers using the system: 6
- ▶ Total staff in practice: 20
- ▶ Average number of patients seen per day: 20-25
- ▶ Approximate number of new prescriptions written per week: 125-150
- ▶ Approximate number of refill authorizations managed per week: 100

working the way it was supposed to,” she says.

“We’ve invested a lot of money in our EMR and e-prescribing systems, and we’ve spent a lot of time working with the pharmacies in our community to address the glitches to get things working smoothly,” says Dr. Andrews. “Today, the seamless two-way communication between the clinic and the neighborhood pharmacies is working like a charm.”