



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**WASHINGTON RANKS HIGH IN KEY INDICATOR FOR PATIENT SAFETY:
RANKED #10 STATE IN THE NATION FOR ELECTRONIC PRESCRIBING**

**Washington Honored as Nation's Community Pharmacies
Announces 3rd Annual Safe-Rx Awards**

WASHINGTON D.C. – March 4, 2008 – The National Association of Chain Drug Stores (NACDS), the National Community Pharmacists Association (NCPA) and SureScripts® honored Washington State and three physicians during the National Patient Safety Awareness Week. The host of the third annual SafeRx Awards, former Speaker of the House and Founder of the Center for Health Transformation, Newt Gingrich announced Drs. David Merkley (Richland), Lon Shin (Monteseno) and Karen Carlson PA-C (Bellevue) as the Washington state physician winners of this esteemed award, demonstrating outstanding leadership through their use of e-prescribing technology.

This Safe-Rx award was created to raise awareness of e-prescribing as a more secure, accurate and informed means of prescribing patients medication. Washington finished tenth in the nation for the second consecutive year as part of the nationwide review and ranking of e-prescribing adoption across all 50 states.

Governor Christine Gregoire was pleased with the news of this second year Safe-Rx win for Washington State commenting, "*This is a wonderful acknowledgment that our focus on seeking smart ways to reduce healthcare costs, increase patient safety, and get providers the right technology tools they can use is consistently bearing fruit. Our Board of Pharmacy, SureScript vendors and pharmacies have worked to accelerate the adoption of this safer, electronic form of prescribing and we are pleased with the results in increased patient safety and smarter processing.*"

Other key contributing state organizations include Whatcom County Initiative, OneHealthPort, Washington Department of Health (legislation prohibiting cursive prescriptions) and the certified solution provider of all three award winner's, ChartConnect. Notable quotes include Washington State Safe-Rx award winner Ms. Karen Carlson, "*This system provides timely and legible documentation of prescriptions with the least amount of effort. It also provides formulary and Rx History which improves efficiency.*"

The Safe-Rx awards are based on an analysis of data from new prescriptions and refill responses electronically transmitted over the Pharmacy Health Information Exchange™, operated by SureScripts. States are ranked by the number of prescriptions routed electronically in 2007 as a percentage of the total number of prescriptions eligible for electronic routing.

For a full state report or to see more about Safe-Rx award winners please visit:

<http://www.surescripts.com/Safe-Rx/>

For Prescribers

For more information about how to start prescribing electronically, prescribers can go to www.GetRxConnected.com/WA. The site includes an online tool designed to help prescribers, and their staffs, determine if their practice already possesses the technology to establish a direct, two-way, computer-to-computer connection with their local pharmacies. Prescribers can also call with

questions about the assessment or electronic prescribing in general: 1-866-RxReady (1-866-797-3239). To learn more about ChartConnect, the certified solution provider for all physician Safe-Rx award winners of 2007 prescribers can go to www.chartconnect.com or call 877-567-6825.

For Patients

For patients, e-prescribing means a safer and more efficient prescribing process -- no more lost prescriptions, no trip to the pharmacy to drop off the prescription and no illegible handwriting for the pharmacist to interpret. Residents of Washington who are interested in finding out more about how electronic prescribing benefits them and their families can go to www.GetRxConnected.com/WA/patients. The web site also features helpful advice on how residents can help their physician Get Connected to their local community pharmacy.

About NACDS

The National Association of Chain Drug Stores (NACDS) represents the nation's leading retail chain pharmacies and suppliers, helping them better meet the changing needs of their patients and customers. Chain pharmacies operate more than 38,000 pharmacies, employ 112,000 pharmacists, fill more than 2.3 billion prescriptions yearly, and have annual sales of nearly \$700 billion. Other members include more than 1,000 suppliers of products and services to the chain drug industry. NACDS international membership has grown to include 80 members from 25 countries. For more information about NACDS, visit www.nacds.org.

About NCPA

The National Community Pharmacists Association, founded in 1898, represents the nation's community pharmacists, including the owners of more than 24,000 pharmacies. The nation's independent pharmacies, independent pharmacy franchises, and independent chains dispense nearly half of the nation's retail prescription medicines.

About SureScripts

Founded by the pharmacy industry in 2001, SureScripts operates the Pharmacy Health Information Exchange™ which facilitates the secure electronic transmission of prescription information between physicians and pharmacists and provides access to life-saving information about patients during emergencies or routine care. Today, more than 95 percent of all pharmacies and all major physician technology vendors in the United States are certified on the Pharmacy Health Information Exchange. More information about SureScripts is available at www.surescripts.com.

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