Executive Order 2008-21
Patient Safety and e-Prescribing Initiative

WHEREAS, patients experience more than 1.5 million adverse drug events in the United States each year due to preventable errors in prescribing or administering medication; and

WHEREAS, the financial costs associated with these avoidable errors in the United States exceeds $4 billion per year; and

WHEREAS, the Institute of Medicine, a Congressionally-chartered, but privately funded branch of the National Academy of Sciences, concludes that at least one out of four adverse drug events can be prevented by measures such as electronic prescribing (e-prescribing), clinical decision support tools, and patient documentation of their medications, nutritional supplements, and drug and food allergies; and

WHEREAS, the Institute of Medicine recommends that all prescribers and pharmacies utilize e-prescribing by the year 2010; and

WHEREAS, health care providers in Arizona utilize e-prescriptions at a rate of just 2.8% of possible prescriptions that could be transmitted by e-prescribing; and

WHEREAS, utilization of e-prescribing avoids mistakes that accompany hand-written prescriptions, creates opportunities for automated systems to warn of drug appropriateness and harmful drug interactions, can provide access to a patient's full medication history for both routine health care and emergency situations, and produces greater convenience for patients and providers by reducing the number of visits and calls to pharmacies; and

WHEREAS, to further patient safety, the federal Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality encourages Americans to maintain personal health records that include their medication lists, allergies, and health history;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Janet Napolitano, Governor of the State of Arizona, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Arizona Constitution and the laws of this State, hereby order and direct as follows:

1. The Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System, Government Information Technology Agency, Arizona Department of Administration, and other agencies, as appropriate, shall work with Arizona Health-e Connection and its EAzRx initiative to significantly increase the utilization of e-prescribing in Arizona. Specifically, Arizona's collaborative effort shall strive to improve patient safety and control costs by making Arizona a national leader in e-prescribing practices.

2. The Executive branch agencies shall work with Arizona Health-e Connection and the health professional licensing boards to educate prescribing clinicians, pharmacists, pharmacy technicians, hospital and long-term care facility professionals, other health care

professionals and employers about the benefits of preventing adverse drug events through e-prescribing, and adopting information technology software that facilitates e-prescribing.

3. The Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System, the Arizona Department of Health Services, and the Arizona Department of Administration shall implement measures to reduce medication errors for individuals enrolled in their health systems and to control costs related to such errors through increased e-prescribing use by contracted health plans and providers.

4. The Government Information Technology Agency shall identify special challenges that may hinder adoption of e-prescribing in rural Arizona communities, and shall develop recommendations to address such challenges.

5. The Executive branch agencies shall work with Arizona Health-e Connection to develop strategies to promote patient awareness and use of consumer tools related to medication safety including the Med Form available at www.themedform.com or another personal health record, and shall encourage Arizona consumers to routinely maintain a list of all drugs and medications being consumed, including prescription drugs, over-the-counter drugs, and other products, such as vitamins and minerals, and to review this list with their health care providers.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused to be affixed the Great Seal of the State of Arizona.

Jan Napolitano
GOVERNOR

DONE at the Capitol in Phoenix on this 1 day of May in the Year Two Thousand and Eight and of the Independence of the United States of America the Two Hundred and Thirty-Second.

ATTEST:

Janice K. Brewer
SECRETARY OF STATE