

Italy One Step Closer to Electronic Prescriptions



Since 1 April 2011, the Aosta Valley (Valle d'Aosta) region in north-western Italy has required doctors to send the patient information contained in their prescriptions to the Ministry of Economy and Finance (Ministero dell'Economia e delle Finanze).

This required information includes the tax code, the prescription date, type and code, any exemptions, Italian Medicines Agency (Agenzia Italiana del Farmaco - AIFA) notes and the type of visit. The information is to be sent via the Central Reception System (Sistema di Accoglienza Centrale - SAC, in Italian). To ensure that doctors comply with the requirement, a cut of 1.15 % will be made in their annual remuneration if they do not send patient information for at least 80 % of their prescriptions.

This is just one of the first steps that will lead to a system of electronic prescription, since patients will no longer need to submit a paper prescription at the pharmacy, but merely provide their health insurance card and the code provided by their doctor in order for the prescription to be viewed on a computer.

Aosta Valley will be followed in making the change by the other Italian regions during 2011:

1 May: Emilia-Romagna;

1 July: Abruzzo, Campania, Molise and Piedmont;

1 September: Calabria;

1 October: Liguria and Basilicata.

For the remaining regions, the dates will be fixed through a special decree.

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