

*Nine national industry  
associations support*



*as a priority initiative.*

Contact any participating association for further details and to get involved!

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**How Canada's  
Pharmacy  
Supply Chain  
Uses Technology  
for Efficient  
Consumer  
Response**



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Canadian Pharmacists Association  
Association des pharmaciens du Canada

**www.ecrx.org**



## What on earth is ECR<sub>x</sub>?

**E**fficient Consumer Response for the Pharmacy Supply Chain (ECR<sub>x</sub>) is an industry initiative to reduce or eliminate unnecessary costs and activities throughout the pharmacy supply chain. Through ECR<sub>x</sub>, pharmacy retailers, wholesalers and suppliers are working together to find ways to eliminate inefficient operating practices that do not add benefit to the consumer. ECR<sub>x</sub> focuses on enablers for major pharmacy categories: prescription drugs, non-prescription drugs and cosmetics.

## What is it for?

**T**he goal is to achieve a continuous product flow from the manufacturing line to the store checkout, driven by consumer purchases and transmitted through a paperless system. The idea is to benefit consumers by having the right product, at the right place, at the right time.

## How will we get there?

**G**iven the intricate ways retailers, wholesalers, suppliers and others interface in the pharmacy supply chain, success in this initiative to streamline unnecessary costs can be achieved only through the participation of all sectors of the industry. The process is guided by the ECR<sub>x</sub> Stakeholder Committee, comprised of senior retailing, wholesaling and supplier executives. Its mission is to identify Best Practices in industry-wide processes. Best Practices are recommended standards and performance guidelines in non-proprietary areas that, when implemented, will make the pharmacy supply chain more efficient.

## Enablers — What are they?

**A**n enabler is any non-proprietary business practice that provides a common benefit among trading partners when adopted as an industry-accepted standard. The ECR<sub>x</sub> initiative has identified a number of enablers that will help the supply chain resolve inefficient business practices. The enablers will provide trading partners with a common framework that they can use in developing their own proprietary programs.

Four ECR<sub>x</sub> enablers have been identified as top priority.

## The Top 4 ECR<sub>x</sub> Enablers:

- **Barcoding and Product Identification** is the mandatory first step. Accurate data for the entire supply chain activity originates from the successful capture of product identification through the use of barcodes on every item, case and pallet. The U.P.C. number is widely utilized in pharmacy, with a compliance rate of over 95%.
- **EDI (Electronic Data Interchange)** is the electronic transfer of business data from computer to computer, using a recognized industry standard. This standard incorporates both the format and layout of the data. ECR<sub>x</sub> has adopted the VICS 4010 standard, consistent with ECR (grocery) and EFR (food service). The true benefit of EDI is realized by integrating this information into internal applications.
- **ECCnet**, developed by the Electronic Commerce Council of Canada (ECCC), is an on-line industry catalogue to ensure electronic data integrity by providing a single, standardized record of product details for e-commerce communication.
- **Returned Goods / Unsaleables** industry solutions will be developed following these guiding principles: to reduce the overall incidence of returned goods/unsaleables; to simplify the process; and determine cost accountability.

**Industry Standards and Timelines have now been announced for the EDI and Barcoding enablers. For details, visit [www.ecrx.org](http://www.ecrx.org)**