

# Safe access to medical data abroad: The epSOS Services

When we travel abroad as a tourist, business traveller, exchange student or regular cross-border commuter, we rarely think about healthcare. Yet, when we do find ourselves seeking a health professional (physician, nurse or pharmacist) abroad, it is often for sudden or unexpected health problems that require urgent or even emergency healthcare.

epSOS is the main European electronic Health (“eHealth”) interoperability project co-funded by the European Commission which aims at improving medical treatment for European citizens abroad by providing the health professional with the necessary patient data in a secure electronic format. This will of course only be possible if you as patient give your consent to the health professional.

The following services developed during the course of the epSOS project will be tested in practice in a **pilot operation phase**.

- \* **Patient Summary**: Access to important medical data for the further treatment of patients
- \* Cross-border use of **electronic prescription services** (“ePrescription” or “eMedication”)

For the first time, European patients, will then have the opportunity to use cross-border Patient Summary and ePrescription services abroad when seeking healthcare in participating epSOS pilot countries. Additionally, phase 2 (extension phase) of epSOS will further consolidate, scale up and operationalize the epSOS Services for ID management, security, semantics and standards.

If feasible, the following new epSOS will be tested:

- \* **Patient access to data**: Provide patients with access to their information
- \* Integration of **112 emergency services**: Access to patient summary data in order to improve the quality of care in the event their services are required
- \* Integration of the **European Health Insurance Card (EHIC)**

## What is a Patient Summary?

An epSOS Patient Summary is a standardized set of patient data, which includes the most important clinical facts needed to ensure safe and secure healthcare.

## Information included in a Patient Summary

- **General information** about the patient (name, birth date, gender, etc.)
- A **medical summary** consisting of the most important clinical patient data (e.g. allergies, current medical problems, medical implants, or major surgical procedures during the last six months); the medical summary is designed to include all essential information, and at the same time to be as clear and easy as possible to use during a consultation
- A list of **current medication** including all prescribed medication that the patient is currently taking
- **Information** about the Patient Summary itself (e.g. when and by whom was the Patient Summary generated or updated)

## How to use your epSOS Patient Summary?

### HOME COUNTRY:

1. Consult an epSOS health professional in your home country.
2. Give your prior agreement to the health professional. She or he will then mark your confirmation to participate in the epSOS project.

### FOREIGN COUNTRY:

1. Consult a health professional that participates in the epSOS project. A list of all participating Points of Care (hospitals/health professional's offices) can be found on <http://www.epsos.eu>.
2. Identify yourself to the attending health professional with an ID card.
3. Give your consent that you are still willing to participate.
4. The health professional retrieves your Patient Summary and uses it for the consultation, whereby your Patient Summary is electronically transferred from your home country to the health professional in the visiting country in a secure way.

## What is an ePrescription?

**In general the electronic Prescription (ePrescription) service is made up of electronic prescribing and electronic dispensing:**

- ePrescribing is defined as the electronic prescribing of medicine using software to transmit the prescription data to the pharmacy where it is being retrieved.
- eDispensing is defined as the electronic retrieval of an ePrescription, the dispensing of the medicine to the patient as indicated, and the submission of an electronic report for the medicine dispensed.

## How to use your epSOS ePrescription?

### HOME COUNTRY:

1. Visit an epSOS health professional and give your prior agreement to the health professional.
2. Get your epSOS ePrescription signed.

### FOREIGN COUNTRY:

1. Then you require medication in another epSOS pilot country.
2. Visit a pharmacy participating in the epSOS pilot phase (participating pharmacies can be found on <http://www.epsos.eu>).
3. Identify yourself to the pharmacist/staff at the pharmacy and ask for your ePrescription.
4. The pharmacist will retrieve your ePrescriptions via the pharmacy's computer in a secure way.
5. The requested medication will be dispensed to you.

#### NOTES:

- ePrescriptions dispensed through epSOS Services are today not eligible for reimbursement processes.
- Be aware that there are some exceptions such as e.g. narcotics which are out of the epSOS Services scope and therefore cannot be dispensed.
- If a prescribed medical product is not available in the country you are visiting, your attending pharmacist may, depending on the circumstances, dispense a different brand or package size of a comparable and appropriate product.
  - Note that pharmacists have the professional right to deny dispensation if any unclarities exist.

## Data protection

The entire epSOS Services are subject to extremely strict data security and protection standards.



**Read more: [www.epsos.eu](http://www.epsos.eu)**