

## Amarillo Medical Specialists, LLP

### Safe and Secure e-Prescribing of Controlled Substances

#### The Challenge

Amarillo Medical Specialists, LLP, the largest private, multi-specialty practice in the Texas Panhandle, needed a better way to prescribe controlled substances.

#### The Solution

Amarillo replaced their token-based e-prescribing method with an app that uses two-factor authorization and integrates with an Apple Watch® to prescribe electronically.

#### The Results

Amarillo's providers now have a fast, simple, and seamless means for electronic prescribing of controlled substances. They enjoy faster workflows and can focus attention on their patients.

#### Serving the Texas Panhandle More Efficiently

Situated in the middle of the Texas Panhandle, the Amarillo metropolitan area is home to 300,000 people, as well as the region's largest, private, multi-specialty medical practice, Amarillo Medical Specialists (AMS), with nearly 50 providers at three locations.

"We serve a five-state area for general practice, with multiple specialties, plus neurology and gynecology," said Dr. William C. Biggs, Managing Partner and Chief Medical Information Officer.

Dr. Biggs has been practicing endocrinology in Amarillo since 1986. He is always looking for ways that AMS can further enhance the services they offer to their patients.

#### From Awkward to Awesome: No More Dongles!



William C. Biggs, MD, Chief Medical Information Officer

Recently, Dr. Biggs helped lead an effort at AMS to find a better way to handle the electronic prescribing of controlled substances.

"Previously, the prescribing of controlled substances was cumbersome," Dr. Biggs said. "We had to pull out a little plastic dongle from our pocket, enter our password, and manually enter a series of code numbers."

"Now, we add the prescription like we normally do, but the send process is a little different. We add the password and then it pushes the request to my watch. I press send and eClinicalWorks® then does all the work in the background and you get a notification on your watch. It has made things easier on the administrative side, which is important, because we are now required to send controlled substance prescriptions electronically," Dr. Biggs said.

## Making a Difference in the Exam Room

“When it’s time to send in a controlled medication,” said Dr. Ako Bradford, one of AMS’ adult primary care providers, “eClinicalWorks shows the medication, I can confirm the pharmacy I’m going to send it to, and then I can include my DEA number.”

Within seconds, he said, the medication is approved, and the physician can confirm that the prescription was sent to and received by the pharmacy. That leaves the doctor free to focus their attention on their patient.

“I’m maintaining conversation and direct contact with my patient,” Dr. Bradford said, “and many times it’s seamless enough to where they’re surprised that by the end of the visit, their medication is already waiting for them at the pharmacy.”

## How AMS Prescribes Controlled Substances

- The physician writes a new prescription or calls up an existing prescription.
- The medication is displayed, a pharmacy selected, and DEA numbers added.
- The physician confirms the medication and enters a code.
- The Authy® app generates a second code that is sent to the physician’s smartwatch.
- The physician receives an alert, confirms the prescription, and presses a button to approve the medication and send the prescription to the pharmacy.
- The physician can use a second screen to confirm the medication has been received by the pharmacy.

## Higher Satisfaction for Patients and Providers

This new e-prescribing method is boosting patient satisfaction throughout Amarillo’s clinic

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*Ako Bradford, MD*

locations. “Just having the watch makes it much easier,” said Dr. Janet Schwartzenberg, an AMS rheumatologist. “The patient visit becomes more streamlined. You have no interruptions because you’re right there with the patient, and you can confirm the actual dosing and move forward.”

Dr. Biggs said that patients really think it’s cool when they see their prescription pop up on the watch. He also uses the app when he takes breaks. He’ll usually check his messages and often has refill requests. With the app, he said, the refill process for controlled substances is almost as easy as for non-controlled substances.

## Finally, Something That “Just Works”

Dr. Alan Keister said that e-prescribing is a welcome example of something that is making the daily routine for physicians just a little bit easier.

“There is a lot more regulation about how we do controlled substances,” he said, “which is a good thing. So, at the end of the day, it allows us to do it in a more efficient way. I can spend more time face-to-face with patients, and less time going through different steps to send a prescription.”

“I would say that if you have a watch and you’re sending controlled substances, you need to be doing this,” Dr. Biggs said. “This is so much easier than what we were doing before.”

“There are a lot of things that are inherently complex in medicine, so it’s good when something just works,” Dr. Bradford added.