1. **Policy Statement**
   All medication prescribing in the RWJMG practice is done via the EMR and e-prescribing\(^1\).

2. **Reason for Policy**
   One of the riskiest procedures that occur in the physician’s office is the prescribing of medications. By law, all prescriptions\(^2\) for medication must be written by a licensed independent practitioner (LIP)\(^3\). Misadventures in medication prescribing and renewing of prescriptions in person or over the telephone may account for up to 25% of all incidents of malpractice that occur in the outpatient setting. “At least half of family medicine’s top 10 medicolegal misadventures relate to the care and communication gaps that telephone prescribing widens\(^4\).” This risk rises significantly if the prescribing physician delegates the renewal process by “protocols” to other members of the clinical team.

   In addition, the renewing of prescriptions via the telephone is a significant associated administrative burden and cost. "According to the University of Minnesota and the Medical Group Management Association Center for Research, the total time spent on the telephone managing

---

\(^1\) Rutgers RWJMG Policy: The Legal medical Record-Contents and Requirements (amended 4/12/2012).

\(^2\) Prescription is defined as “a written direction of remedy for a disease, illness, or injury and the instructions for using that remedy” (NJBME 45:9-14.5.).

\(^3\) In the state of New Jersey, a physician (MD or DO), physician assistant, or nurse practitioner/advanced practice nurse (NP or APN). (For the purpose of this policy, residents in training and fellows are not considered to be LIPs but to have the same authority as licensed practitioners).

\(^4\) Rethinking Your Approach to Prescription “Refills” Teichman, P. and Teichman A. November/December 2011 | www.aafp.org/fpm | FAMILY PRACTICE MANAGEMENTAPPROVALS.
prescriptions approached 350 hours per full-time equivalent physician in 2004. That calculated out to nearly $16,000 annually per FTE physician 5.

The specific purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to the all LIPs and the healthcare team to provide patients with prescriptive medications in a safe, convenient, and efficient manner while conserving vital resources of the Rutgers RWJMG.

3. **Who Should Read This Policy**
All faculty and clinical support staff of Rutgers RWJMG. Ultimate legal responsibility for the prescribing of medications lies with the LIP. Adhering to the guidelines outlined in this policy is the responsibility of the entire clinical team.

4. **Related Documents**
Procedure for Medication Prescribing and Renewals

5. **Contacts**
Office of the Dean, RWJMS (732-235-6300)

6. **The Policy**
   
   A. All medication prescribing in the Rutgers RWJMG practice is done via the electronic medical record (EMR) and e-prescribing.
   
   B. For safety purposes and the convenience of the patient, the prescribing LIP, the pharmacy, and the staff:
   
   i. The LIP should consistently write prescriptions so that the patient has enough medication to last beyond their next scheduled appointment (but not beyond one year). For example, this would be for a 90-day supply with three refills (if the next appointment is to be in one year).
   
   ii. The LIP should, at each visit, reconcile all medications for safety and appropriateness. Verify that the patient has sufficient medication to last until the next visit. Whenever possible, synchronize all of the patient’s medications so that they have the same end date. This will help to reduce the need for multiple requests for medication renewal.
   
   C. Should a patient’s “chronic” prescription run out due to a missed appointment or other incident, a medication renewal 6 should be provided only until the next scheduled appointment or until a new appointment can be arranged which should occur within 1 month at most. **Under no circumstances should a patient be left without the appropriate medication.**
   
   D. A patient who requires a prescription renewal must have a current physician-patient relationship with a Rutgers RWJMG LIP.
   
   E. The preferred process for prescribing new medications and medication renewal is for the prescribing healthcare LIP to perform the renewal. Only in limited circumstances should protocols be used where other licensed practitioners 7 provide the renewal.
   
   F. **All requests for Controlled Substances must be directed to the patient’s primary ordering provider.**

---

5 Cut Down on Prescription Refill Requests | Physicians Practice
6 Prescription/medication renewal: A prescription…to repeat or extend an existing prescription.
7 Licensed practitioner: For purposes of this protocol, Registered Nurses (RN) and Licensed Practical Nurses (LPN) are considered “licensed practitioners” as are residents and fellows.