# Managing Medications in ECW 11

This document discusses medication reconciliation, past Rx history, external Rx history, adding and discontinuing medications from the current medication list, writing new prescriptions from the treatment section of a note, from a telephone encounter, or by using the Quick Order function, and refilling medications from a progress note or telephone encounter.

We get Meaningful Use "credit" for reconciling medications ONLY if the user moves to the medication list from the chief complaint. Why? I don't know – just one of the many stupid things in life, like signing a HIPAA form that no one ever reads, or agreeing to the conditions found in 10 pages of fine print when installing software.
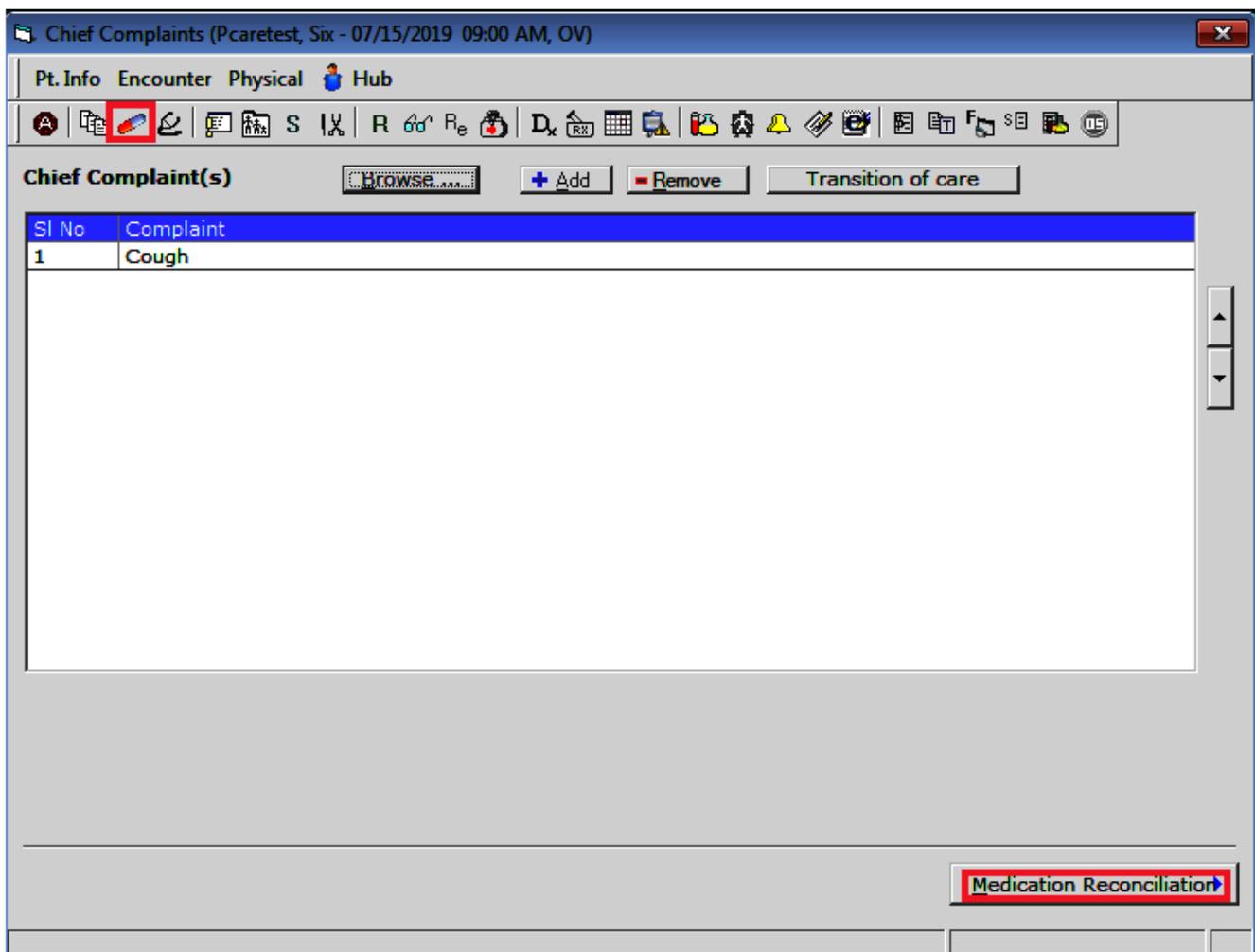
The picture of the capsule in the top navigation bar opens the medication screen, as does clicking on Alt-M – but when reconciling medications, use the navigation icon at the bottom of the chief complaint screen to get the to the medication list.
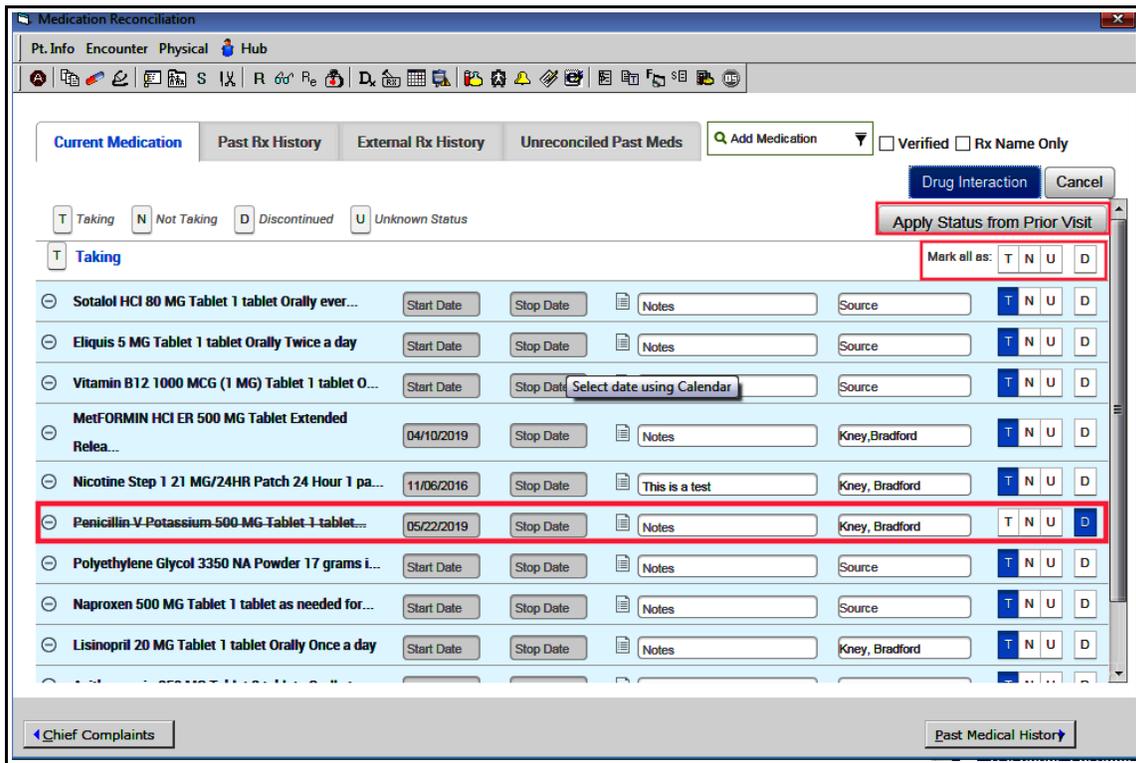
"T" stands for taking, "N" for not taking, "D" for discontinued, and "U" for unknown.

Two quick ways to update a medication list:
- "Apply Status from Prior Visit" – if the medication list got a bit messed up since the last visit (things happen in ECW), try clicking this button to revert the list to mirror that last visit.
- "Mark all as": If some medications were listed as unknown or not taking at the last visit, but today the patient reports taking all the medications, just click on the "T", and all medications will be associated with a "T".

If a medication was discontinued since the last visit, mark it with a "D", as I did with penicillin in the example above. When writing time-limited prescriptions, try to remember to add a stop date so they don't end up living for months (or years) on the patient's medication list.

When the "D" is selected, the box to the right opens. If you wish, a reason can be entered here – such as "No longer needed" under "Others".
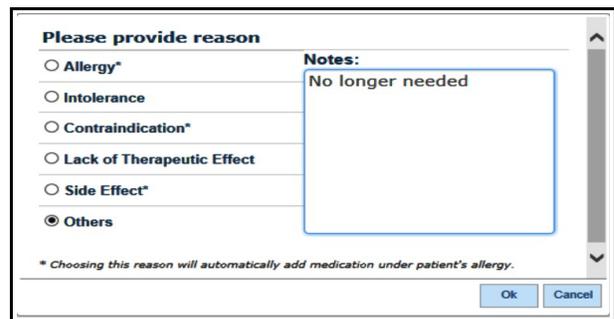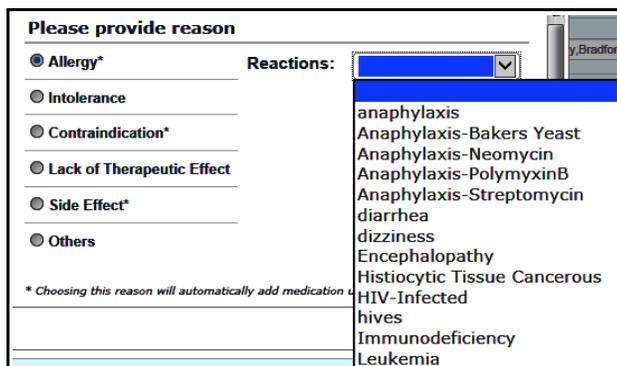
If you choose allergy, contraindication, or side effect, a reaction option opens. This will be added automatically to the allergy list for the patient. The reaction choices are limited, so I usually go back and modify this information in the allergy section of the chart.
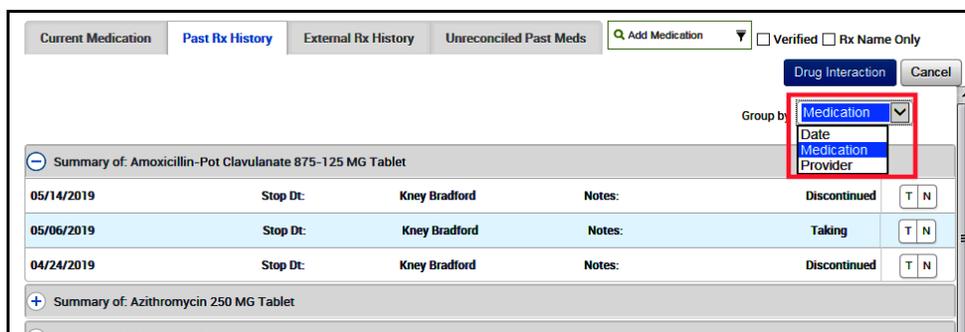
Another place where a note can be entered explaining more about why a medication was discontinued is shown in the screen to the left.
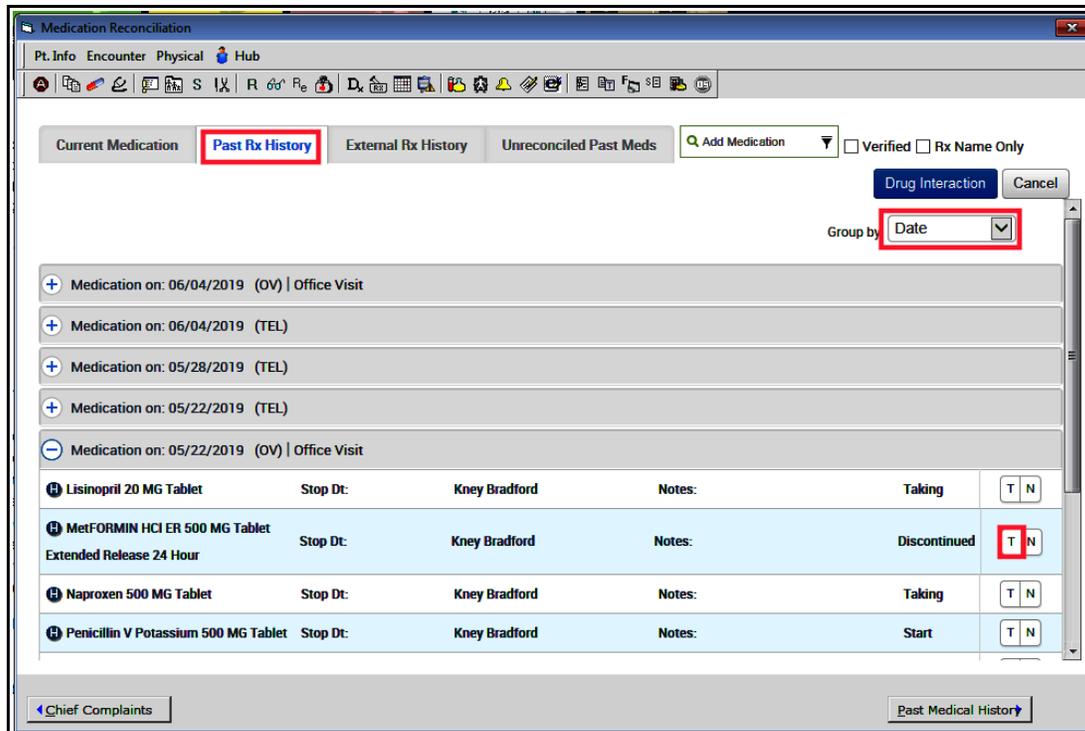
In the "Past Rx History" tab, the medication list from any previous visit can be reviewed – just click on the "+" next to the date, and the medication list opens up. I have used this screen hundreds of times to:
- Find a medication that the patient reported he/she is still taking, but someone had discontinued it in error. In this example, if the patient is still taking metformin, all you need to do is hit the "T" and it will reappear on today's medication list.
- To reconstruct a medication list that has somehow disappeared, or has gotten really messed up. This can happen when the patient is seen by another provider who doesn't really understand ECW, and that provider added and deleted medications inappropriately, or the medication list was not reconciled at a prior visit and all medications are listed as "Unknown".

You can change the filter from "Date" to "Medication" or to "Provider" - this can be helpful in the right circumstances.

The last tab in the medication reconciliation screen that I want to address is "External Rx History". This is a very useful tab when medication noncompliance is suspected as the cause for an inadequate therapeutic response to a new medication. It is also a way to determine what the "new little blue pill" that another provider prescribed really is. This pulls data from pharmacy refills – as you can see from this list, it tracks all refills, including those of prescribers outside of ECW/Prima CARE (Dr. Haisman). It does occasionally miss refills, so if it is really important to know about a medication refill, it is best to call the pharmacy. But this screen can be really useful, and save a bit of frustration and polypharmacy when noncompliance is the problem.
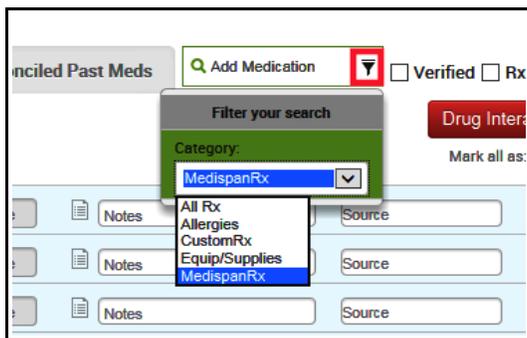
Medications can also be added to the list during reconciliation. Make sure to always use MedispanRx so the drug interaction program will work properly.

Suppose the patient was seen elsewhere and a provider prescribed clarithromycin for the patient's cough. This can be added to the current medication list. The yellow star indicates that a 14 day course of clarithromycin is one of my medication favorites (one option for treating H pylori).
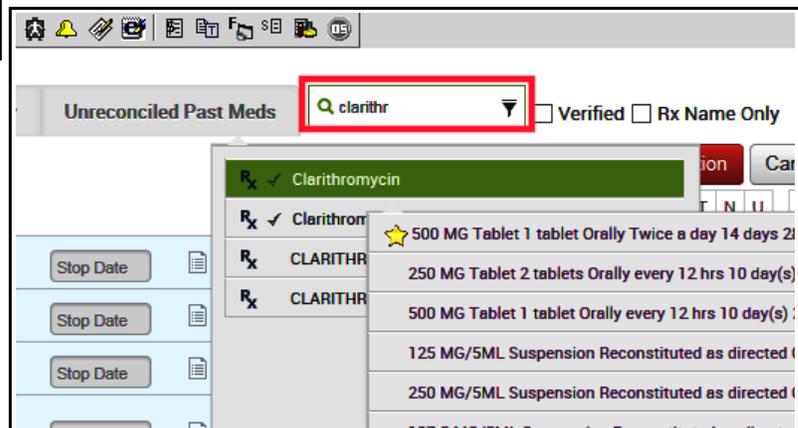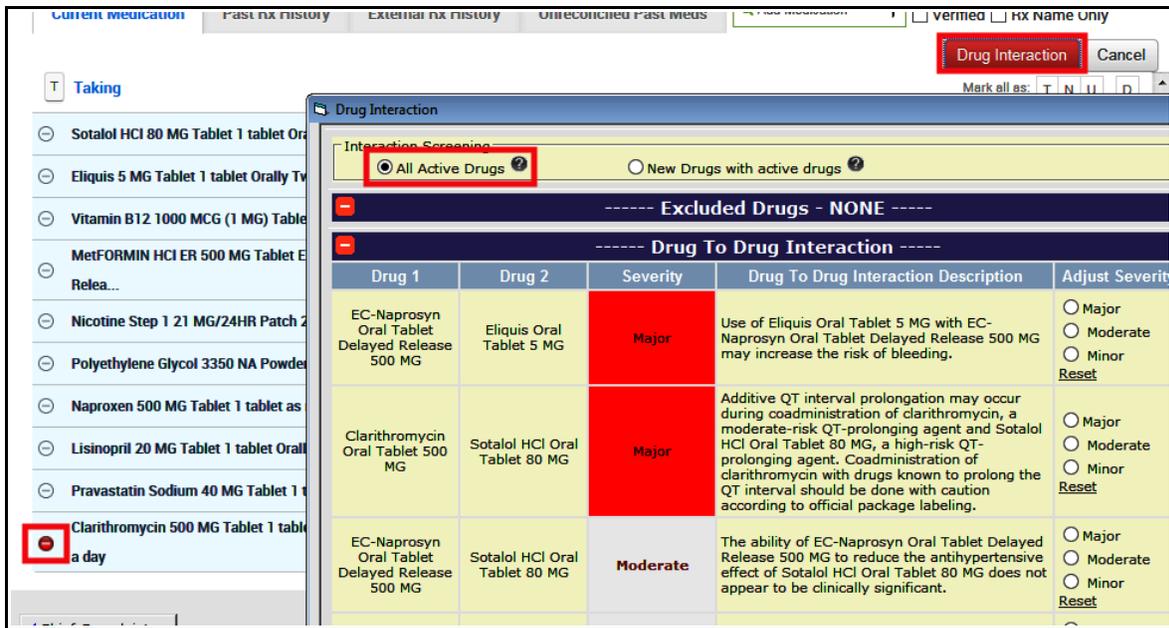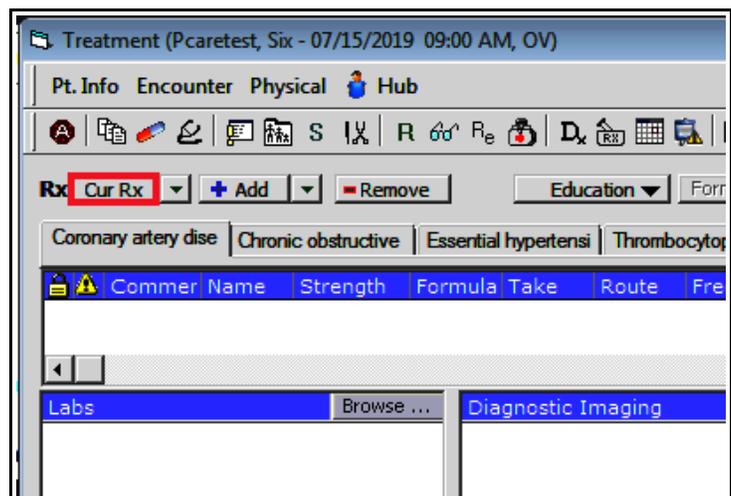
Clicking on the drug interaction icon opens the program that compares the list of structured medications to one another for significant interactions. Here it appropriately points out that naproxen is not a great choice in this patient taking Eliquis, and the clarithromycin plus sotalol has the potential for killing the patient – not good.

The minus sign to the left of medications is active ONLY when a medication is first added to the medication list. So if an error is made when reconciling medications, the medication can be deleted so long as this screen is still active. Once the user has moved to another screen, the minus icon is grayed out and the only way to remove a medication is by hitting the "D" button.
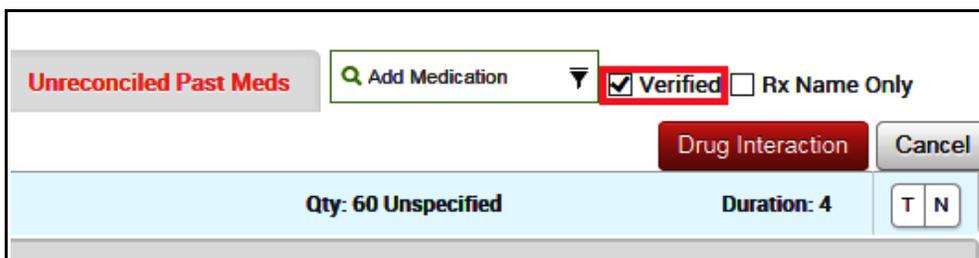
Always remember to click "Verified" after reconciling medications. Don't worry about the "Unreconciled Past Medications".

To refill a current medication, click on "Cur Rx".

In this example, I am refilling famotidine under the diagnosis of "Other". The user can click the "R" for refill, and edit the prescription later. Or choose "30" or "90" days and select the number of refills in the box at the top of the screen. "S" stops the medication, and "C" continues it without creating a prescription.

Clicking on the "H" opens the history of the medication in ECW.

Note the box "Exclude medications with action – Taking". Excluding all the entries of "Taking" makes it much easier to see the dates when the medication was started, refilled, or stopped.

Scrolling down the medication list provides a few of prior encounters. Clicking on the "+" opens the medications from that encounter. Clicking on the blue "OV" opens a view of the encounter.

To start a new medication, simply change the tab from "Medication Summary" to "Add New Rx".
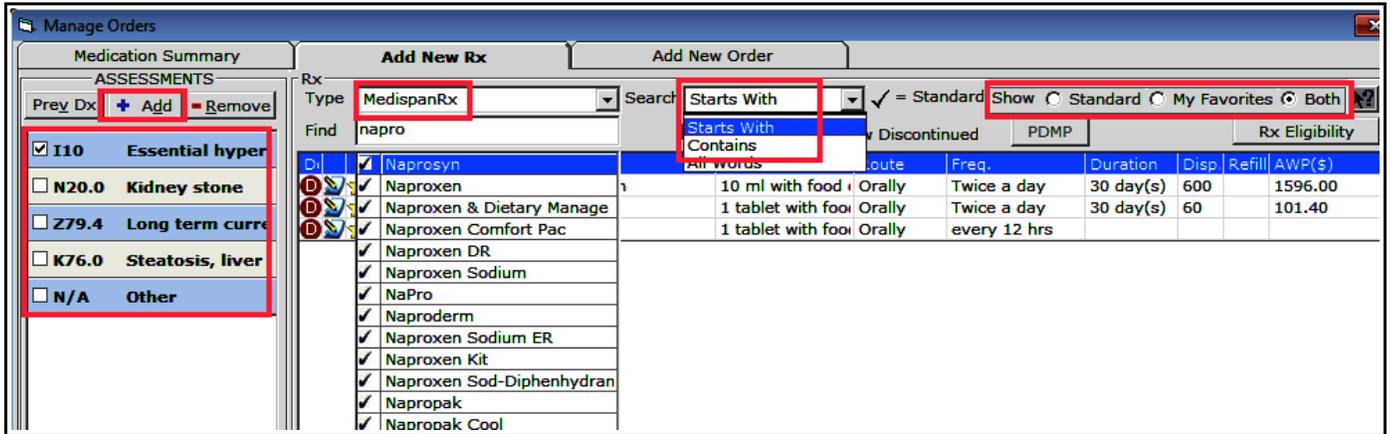
"MedispanRx" should be the filter used whenever writing a new prescription - this makes sure that the NDC code is pulled with the medication, and that the allergy and drug interaction programs will work. At times, other options in the "Type" dropdown – like "Custom" or "All" - will need to used. This is especially true for diabetic supplies and durable medical equipment (like nebulizers, TENS units, etc.). Try changing the search filter from "Starts With" to "Contains" if a medication can't be located in the MedispanRx database. I prefer to see both the standard medication choices as well as my favorites, so I have "Both" selected by default (this option can be changed in the "My Settings" folder). Try to link medications to an appropriate diagnosis – current assessments are visible, and clicking on "Add" opens the Smart Search box where other diagnoses can be added to the assessment list.
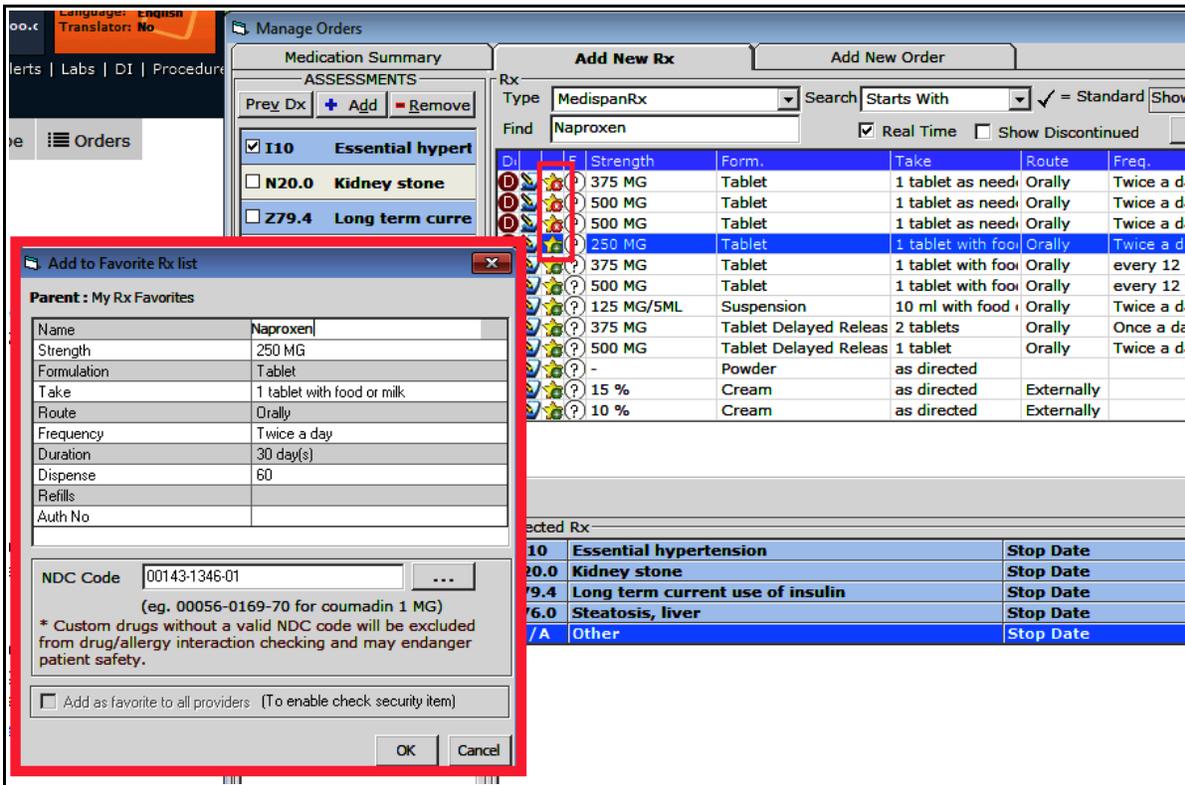
The first 3 entries under naproxen are my favorites – with different doses, number to dispense, and number of refills (not seen here). To delete a favorite, click on the "x" in the yellow star. To make a medication your favorite, click on the "+" in the yellow star. Clicking on the "+" opens the inset screen. The instructions, duration, dispense quantity, and refills can all be modified in this screen.

"Contusion of right knee" was added to the assessments, and the naproxen favorite in blue was dropped into the note as shown below.

Clicking on the naproxen prescription above opens the "Rx Edit" screen. I dislike the keypads that are used for duration, dispense, and refills, but a recent change (July, 2019) restored the ability to free text into these boxes.

Hitting tab moves the cursor from box to box allowing the user to free text rapidly across the prescription. However, one little glitch makes it impossible to click on the options in blue to move them into the blank boxes below – UNLESS the user clicks on the minus button next to the box first.

One caution: If the prescription for naproxen is written "1 tablet as needed, Orally, Twice a day, 30 days, #20" - but then the user returns to the "Take" area and changes the instructions to "1 tablet as need for pain", ECW will automatically recalculate the number of pills and change the #20 to #60 (30 days x twice a day). This is not a big issue with naproxen, but can be a significant problem with opiates and benzodiazepines.
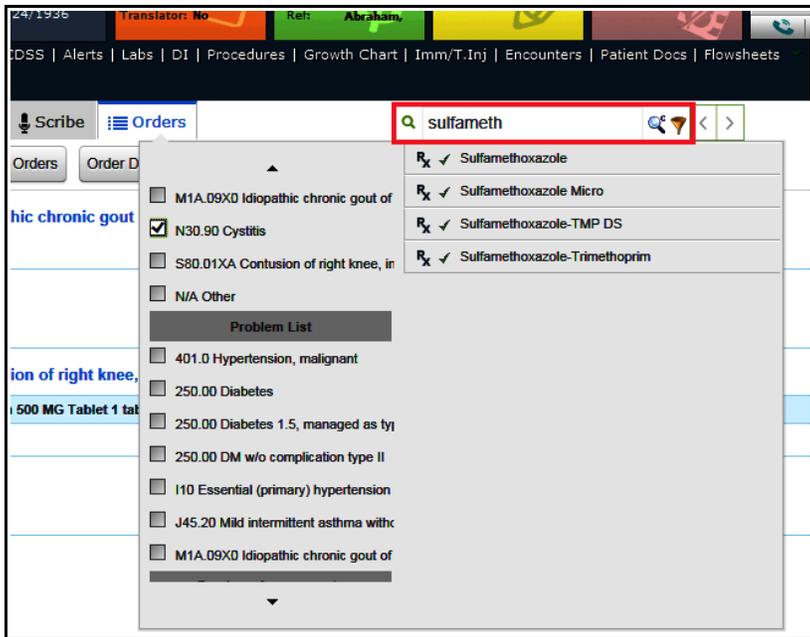
Using the Quick Search box at the top of a progress note is another way to add a prescription.

Do not use the Quick Search box in ECW 11 to order labs or DI – orders end up in the "Today's Orders" area, which does not work with the Prima CARE workflow (in ECW 11e, it will be possible to use this function for lab/DI orders). Prescriptions, however, can be added here in ECW 11.
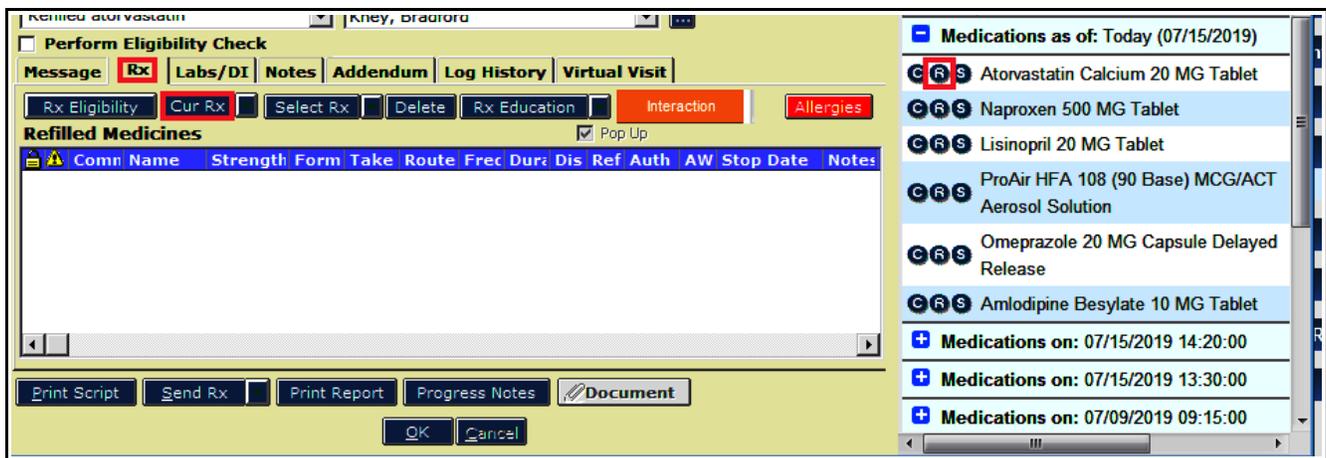
To get to the prescription section of the telephone encounter, click on the "Rx" tab. To refill a prescription in a telephone encounter, either the "R" in the right panel can be used, or the "Cur Rx" button. The latter opens the same screen seen on page 6 of this document after clicking on "Cur Rx" in the treatment screen of a note. The "R" button in the right panel will reproduce the same information found in the last refill of this medication. In both cases, clicking on the medication once it is dropped into the refill section of the screen will open the same "Rx Edit" screen shown on the previous page.

A new medication can be ordered from a telephone encounter by clicking on the "Select Rx" button, using the same workflow shown earlier when ordering a new medication from the treatment section of a note.

One last way to write a prescription in a telephone encounter is to open a virtual visit. Going to the treatment section of a virtual visit uses the same workflow as in a real patient visit.

The last step is to send the prescription to a pharmacy. Click on "Send Rx" - or "ePrescribe Rx" if "Send Rx" does not default to the ePrescribing screen.

I prefer to ALWAYS preview prescriptions before they are sent – so I am SURE ECW hasn't made some change to it, or I haven't missed an error. Once satisfied, click "Send ePrescription".

Brad Kney, MD
July 15, 2019