

Physician eHealth

eHealth Ontario provides funding and other support for physicians and specialists to adopt Electronic Medical Record (EMR) systems, which enables ehealth to have a direct benefit on patient care. The program builds on previous investments in Ontario which resulted in over 3,000 primary care physicians adopting EMRs.

Physician eHealth developed and oversees the EMR Adoption Program to broaden and accelerate physician adoption of EMRs. OntarioMD, a subsidiary of the Ontario Medical Association, is eHealth Ontario's partner for the delivery of the program to eligible physicians. Clinical value to physicians is enhanced by collaborating with OntarioMD and clinicians to accommodate ehealth priorities such as diabetes management and medication management.

Physician eHealth also works on initiatives that will integrate EMRs with other systems to provide physicians with access to timely laboratory information and patient medication profiles.



Benefits

The majority of patient health information is collected in the physician's office. The collection and management of this information electronically in EMR systems is an important foundation for a comprehensive electronic health record for all Ontarians. The ability to electronically exchange information between physicians and other health care providers will enable faster and better patient care.

Patient benefits:

- Improved access to appropriate patient information at the point-of-care.
- Improved patient safety by reducing medication errors and providing proactive preventative care alerts.
- Timely and improved quality of care.

Health service provider benefits:

- EMRs improve access to patient information in a standardized manner providing efficiencies and eliminating duplication of effort at the point-of-care.
- Improved turnaround of information from point-of-care (hospital reports, electronic laboratory results).
- Better coordination of care between multiple practitioners and within health care teams.
- Better security of patient health information than paper-based records.

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Health system benefits:

- Costly hospital encounters are avoided by preventing errors.
- Better information to identify trends, facilitate forecasting and better planning.

Progress to date

Building on the success of the Physician IT Program, a previous joint initiative between the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and the Ontario Medical Association, eHealth Ontario has launched the EMR Adoption Program. The new program is available to all practice-based physicians (primary care physicians and specialists) and physicians funded under the previous program. The number of electronic medical record adopters will increase by 5,700 over the next three years to 9,000 physicians. This total includes 65 per cent of primary care physicians. By March, 2012, 10 million Ontarians, or three out of four Ontarians, will have electronic medical records.

The EMR Adoption Program consists of four components: a subsidy program, change management services, EMR specification management and certification and the OntarioMD.ca physician portal. For details on the EMR Adoption Program, please visit www.ontariomd.com.

eHealth Ontario's Physician eHealth team also works with OntarioMD on other ehealth initiatives to support better patient care. The Hospital Report Manager was designed and implemented to support multiple hospitals and Family Health Teams anywhere in Ontario. Starting in the North Simcoe Muskoka region, patient hospital reports are now delivered electronically from Royal Victoria Hospital in Barrie to family physicians at the Barrie and Community Family Health Team. The Hospital Report Manager eliminates the paper processes (mail, fax and scanning) that were required to receive these reports, integrates information from the reports into the EMR system while reducing the time it takes for information to reach the physicians.

Physician eHealth also funded a series of collaboration projects in Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs):

xwaveEMR interface to HIS Project

LHIN 1 Erie St. Clair

Patient care is being delivered in a more timely manner through real-time HL7 interfaces from Hospital Information Systems (HIS) to xwave's Electronic Medical Records system using HL7 Canada standards. The interfaces enabled four hospitals and a regional cancer centre to share laboratory and diagnostic imaging results and dictated patient reports with 23 physicians' EMR systems quickly and securely.



Southwest Physician Office Interface to Regional EMR (SPIRE) System

LHIN 2 South West

Continuity of care for patients has been improved by giving approximately 100 community physicians (25 sites) electronic access through their EMR to patient results currently sent by fax, paper and telephone. This information is available through the physicians' EMR systems.

ClinicalConnect Portal Expansion

LHIN 4 Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant

Physicians are accessing more information from various sources to improve patient care through ClinicalConnect.

ClinicalConnect is the secure, real-time physician portal that began with Hamilton Health Sciences (HHS).

Data from the Community Care Access Centre's (CCAC) "CHRIS" system is integrated into the portal.

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Physicians can also electronically download data from the portal to their EMRs. The McMaster Plus “1Stop” search service for medical text and literature has been linked into the portal. Also integrated are St Joseph’s Hospital clinical systems including lab results, orders for the patient, hospital reports and pharmacy and allergy information for 300,000 patients. New version of ClinicalConnect is going live in June 2010, providing the framework for the 11 hospitals (23 facilities) in the LHIN to integrate provincial data sources.

Oncology data integration into the ClinicalConnect portal is also underway.

ClinicalConnect is accessed by over 2,000 hospital and community providers.

Patient Results Online/Primary Care Forum

LHIN 7 and 8 Central and Toronto Central

Online information is benefiting patients with chronic diseases who receive care from multiple locations. The use of the existing clinical Patient Results Online (PRO) viewer was expanded to three Community Health Centres (CHCs) and two Family Health Teams (FHTs) in LHIN 7 and 8 (Toronto Central and Central).

PRO allows health care providers to share 15 different reports, including allergies, diagnostic imaging, hematology, biochemistry, progress notes and discharge summaries from the University Health Network, Mount Sinai Hospital, St. Michael’s Hospital, St. Joseph Health Centre and Life Labs. This information is available to over 100 physicians.

The Primary Care eHealth Forum was held for LHIN 7 and 8 CHC and FHT physicians to discuss integration projects that will impact the continuum of care. The format of this forum can be leveraged in the future as a mechanism for engaging physicians in the community about the provincial ehealth strategy and the change management effort required to support future ehealth solutions.

Hospital to Community Family Health Integration / Workflow Analysis

LHIN 10 South East

Patient care is enhanced by automated transmission of consultation notes, discharge summaries and pathology reports from the Quinte Health Care Corporation (QHC) to the Prince Edward Family Health Team and from Kingston General Hospital and Hotel Dieu Hospital (KGH/HDH) to the Maple Family Health team through real-time HL7 messaging.



Workflow analysis of primary care was done through a series of workshops attended by physicians, other clinicians, IT and health informatics professionals from both the hospital and primary care during which workflows and processes around sharing patient medical records between the hospital and primary care domains were studied.

Champlain Extranet

LHIN 11 Champlain

Clinician efficiency is enhanced by the Champlain Extranet, hosted by the Winchester District Medical Hospital (WDMH).

The Extranet was developed with LHIN 11 as a virtual collaboration space to streamline resources, support health projects and enhance communication and collaboration among primary care physicians, especially those practicing in rural communities, across the LHIN and with hospitals. The Extranet provides a secure web-based environment with established standards for implementing content management to facilitate the exchange, modification and sharing of information.

An initial application enables 38 community physicians to use the Extranet to manage their on-call schedules and to book hospital resources or rooms.

In total, over 1,000 health care providers in the LHIN are now registered to use the collaboration space for a range of other applications such as accessing and managing contact lists, meeting calendars and minutes of various committees, electronic forms and workflows, special projects, memoranda, information and resources and educational events.

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Wait Time Order Sets

LHIN 12 North Simcoe Muskoka

Wait times were reduced at Royal Victoria Hospital (RVH) through the use of the Wait Times Information System (WTIS) and developing an electronic application to capture standard pre-admission order sets that augment the information captured from pre-admission forms into the WTIS electronic booking form.

This project used a multidisciplinary team approach which successfully streamlined the workflow between surgeons' offices and RVH, which improves patient safety and the patient experience.

The instances of mismatched, missed and lost orders resulting from faxed paper order sets having to be manually matched with the electronic booking form for surgeries was greatly reduced and wait times were reduced because surgeries did not have to be cancelled due to missing pre-op order sets.

45 surgeons with 47 administrative assistants are using the electronic booking application.

TFHT / TDH Connectivity Project

LHIN 13 North East

Physicians receive timely information to make better care decisions through the Timmins Family Health Team / Timmins District Hospital (TFHT / TDH) connectivity project.

The project integrated care delivery between the Timmins District Hospital and the Family Health Team (FHT) EMR by transmitting admissions and discharge reports, consultants' letters, diagnostic reports, laboratory reports, pathology and emergency room visits from the hospital to the FHT's EMR.

eCare Kenora

LHIN 14 North West

Physician efficiency improved with the ability to share information and access patient information away from their offices.

This project provided eDocumentation, eCollaboration, and eRemote services between physicians, Lake of the Woods District Hospital, community partners and stakeholders, Sunset Country Family Health Team and community pharmacies as well as Northern Ontario School of Medicine (NOSM) students.

eDocumentation allows the hospital and three FHT sites to securely share diagnostic imaging, physiotherapy, hospital lab or discharge reports and transfer them into the FHT EMR system.

eCollaboration provided FHT physicians, specialists, dietitians, nurse practitioners, chiropractors, physiotherapists, hospital departments and community-based health organizations with a secure portal for communication, referrals and the tracking and booking of patients. 21 community physicians were involved.

eRemote allows physicians and FHT staff to securely access their patients' EMRs remotely whether from home, between sites, the hospital or wherever they travelled to other communities giving them complete patient information at all times and allowing them to capture new information into the EMR.

Next steps

eHealth Ontario's Physician eHealth team will continue its oversight of the EMR Adoption Program and monitor its progress and realization of annual targets for physician adoption. It is also exploring opportunities with existing health information systems and health care providers to integrate them with EMRs to give physicians the information they need to assess a patient and provide excellent care.

The next phase of the OntarioMD Hospital Report Manager will be to implement the solution at three additional hospitals (Collingwood General Marine Hospital, Headwaters Healthcare Centre and Georgian Bay Hospital) and three Family Health Teams (FHTs) over the next year. Additionally, it may be implemented at other hospitals and FHTs in the province who may require a report manager application.

Physician eHealth will also evaluate proposals for new collaboration projects for the 2010-11 fiscal year that will further increase the exchange and integration of patient information in the LHINs.