

Digital health assists in better coordination of care

Community Health Centres are valuable organizations that provide primary health and health promotion services to individuals in the community, often times individuals presenting with complex health concerns and facing social or economic barriers. Grand River Community Health Centre (GRCHC) provides community-based primary health care delivered by an interdisciplinary team and also offers a wide array of wellness activities including zumba and walking programs. The health care team includes physicians, nurse practitioners, nurses, a social worker, a registered dietitian, a chronic disease worker, a community support facilitator and a counsellor.

Janet Noble (pictured at right) is the Director of Primary Care and Community Health at GRCHC. She has worked closely with the cSWO Change Management and Adoption Delivery Partner, HITS eHealth Office for the past two years to ensure staff feel confident using the cSWO Regional Clinical Viewer, ClinicalConnect™. The HITS eHealth Office provides ClinicalConnect training to new staff, explains the latest enhancements to the tool and answers users' questions. Janet describes staff at the HITS eHealth Office as knowledgeable about digital health and the solutions they deploy.

As an example, Janet says the use of ClinicalConnect by members of the GRCHC team has benefitted clients living with multiple conditions and complex chronic diseases who are

part of Health Links, a model of care where all health care providers in a community coordinate patient care plans. Accessing data in ClinicalConnect pinpoints Health Links clients and familiarizes care teams with other clinicians within the client's circle of care who can then coordinate care planning. Access to the client's previous and current care providers informs the primary care team of the existing services in place for the client, eliminating duplicate referrals and saving time otherwise spent retrieving patients' health information from disparate sources.

Guillermo Rodriguez (also pictured above) is a social worker on the counselling team at GRCHC and uses ClinicalConnect to help inform him of other clinicians within his clients' circle of care. Guillermo credits ClinicalConnect with helping identify gaps in a client's circle of care, enabling him to recommend services that the client should be receiving when developing a client's care plan. The clinicians at GRCHC, like Guillermo, are an integral part of their clients' circle of care, and ClinicalConnect is accessible to them anytime, anywhere, as a tool to enable the coordination of the best care possible to their clients.

"It is a comfort in knowing that client information is available in ClinicalConnect 24/7 in order to enhance the provisioning of patients' care," says Janet.



Additional medication information now accessible in ClinicalConnect

On January 2nd, pharmacy data from Cambridge Memorial Hospital was made accessible in the Hospital Meds view, Pharmacy Module of the cSWO Regional Clinical Viewer, ClinicalConnect™. With the introduction on January 1st of OHIP+ (for youth, children and babies, 24 years old or under), that information is now accessible in the Home Meds view for ClinicalConnect users from Participant Organizations approved to access data from the Digital Health Drug Repository (DHDR). In addition to OHIP+, the repository also includes information on Ontario publicly funded drugs and monitored drugs (narcotics and controlled substances) from the Narcotic Monitoring System (NMS), as well as pharmacy services. Ontario Drug Benefit records in the DHDR date back to 2010 and NMS records date back to 2012.

To learn more about OHIP+, please [click here](#), and for ClinicalConnect users, resource materials are available at <https://info.clinicalconnect.ca/CC/healthcare/resource-centre-main>.

With the integration of OHIP+ data, this represents another major milestone and expands on what has been available to date in the Drug Profile Viewer (DPV). In addition, access to this critical clinical data supports improved patient-centered care by providing authorized health care providers secure electronic access to a patient's drug and pharmacy service information and allowing them more time for diagnosis, treating and communicating with the patient.

IN THIS ISSUE:

Page 2 – Diagnostic images are a window into physiotherapy patients' healing progress

Page 2 – Accessing digital health helps pharmacy avoid adverse drug events, improve care

Page 3 – Digital health update from across the province

Diagnostic images are a window into physiotherapy patients' healing progress

Christy Taunton and Mark Holmes are both physiotherapists at Talbot Trail Physiotherapy, a multi-site physiotherapy practice in south west Ontario. Physiotherapists are an important part of the circle of care for many patients – and more physiotherapy clinics are now able to access the cSWO Regional Clinical Viewer, ClinicalConnect™.

As Christy explains, “It makes it dramatically easier to get important diagnostic images for the patients. Before, we had to wait a day or two to get a report back. We could never look at images unless we requested them on CD. This wasn't timely, especially if we had a question about what was safe for a patient to do in their treatment. Our goal is always to do what's safest and best for the patient – and being able to have information at our fingertips through the diagnostic images available in ClinicalConnect is a big improvement.”

Christy recalls a recent patient case where access to the images in ClinicalConnect paved the way for optimal care: “I had a young woman with back pain come into the clinic. It actually ended up being scoliosis. Being able to see the pictures was really powerful for the patient and their family – it was really motivating to see the image behind their diagnosis and to know how important the physiotherapy exercises were. It motivated them to be an active part of their own care.”

When Mark sees a fracture image of a patient, he can go beyond the written report of an orthopedic specialist and actually see whether healing is occurring in the bones: “I can see if there are still distinct lines or if there are callus forming which indicates that yes, it is healing. It helps inform our care plans and shows the progress of the patient's recovery. The information available is great and the system is just fantastic to have such a wealth of patient insight.”

Provincial First - The first community pharmacy in Ontario went live with access to the Digital Health Drug Repository through the cSWO Regional Clinical Viewer, ClinicalConnect™ on Monday, January 8th. Personal Care Pharmacy Solutions Inc: The Medicine Shoppe Pharmacy in Kitchener can now access this important data to support improved patient outcomes and decreased risk of adverse drug events.

Accessing digital health helps pharmacy avoid adverse drug events, improve care

An Erie St. Clair pharmacy is crediting access to the cSWO Regional Clinical Viewer, ClinicalConnect™, with improved treatment times, better workflow between health service providers and reduced risk of medication errors, according to the findings of a benefits realization study conducted there.

The Rexall specialty pharmacy in Amherstburg deals exclusively with IV requests and home infusions for the Erie St. Clair Local Health Integration Network's Home and Community Care (HCC) team, including the management and preparation of bone metabolism regulator infusions for cancer patients.

The study found that, prior to gaining access to ClinicalConnect, the HCC team's front-line nursing staff would sometimes find themselves without critical information regarding blood work and would have to file a Medical Update Request with their patients' oncologist, who would in turn advise the pharmacy of whether or not the infusion could proceed.

With ClinicalConnect, Rexall's pharmacists can determine whether their patients' bloodwork is within prescribed parameters by checking results through the regional clinical viewer, and in most cases, prepare an infusion without having to involve the oncologist.

“Timely access to patient information through ClinicalConnect has greatly enhanced my effectiveness as a pharmacist and broadened my role as a provider of home infusion pharmacy services to a vulnerable patient sector,” says Rob Giegerich, RPh.

“I routinely make interventions and recommendations based on lab and microbiology results to improve patient outcomes and prevent drug-related problems. Access to clinical data is an essential component in the provision of comprehensive and effective pharmacy care.”

According to the Canadian Pharmacists Association, electronic health records (EHRs) have helped the role of pharmacists evolve from a primarily dispensing capacity to one that involves significant responsibilities in managing drug therapies and engaging in direct patient care. A recent Canada Health Infoway survey of pharmacists found that EHRs not only enabled increased productivity, but enhanced the quality of patient care.

The cSWO Program is a partnership of four change management and adoption delivery partners (TransForm SSO, South West Region, eHealth Centre of Excellence and HITS eHealth Office), the solution delivery partner (Hamilton Health Sciences), and program manager (London Health Sciences Centre). The regional digital health program is funded by eHealth Ontario as part of the ConnectingOntario initiative.

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Funded by eHealth Ontario



Major upgrades to eHealth Ontario's clinical viewers

Recent improvements to two clinical viewers will improve workflow and provide access to additional clinical data.

The latest upgrade to the ConnectingOntario Clinical Viewer gives clinicians in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) and Northern and Eastern Ontario regions access to more valuable data as well as an improved user experience. Now information about publicly funded medications and monitored drugs dispensed through the province's narcotics monitoring system is available to over 100,000 clinicians. The release also contained privacy enhancements and better custom clinical views.

This follows a major upgrade to ClinicalConnect™, the Regional Clinical Viewer for the connecting South West Ontario (cSWO) Program, completed in November 2017. This updated version displays a new and more modern user interface that has been designed to improve the user experience and workflow, laying the foundation for other enhancements to be made in the future. Access to critical data, including lab and diagnostic tests and results, medications, and hospital reports continue to be available in custom views.

More leaders in mental health care contributing to the digital health record

Good news! Two acute and community mental health and addictions care facilities are now contributing to the Clinical Data Repository and the Provincial Client Registry, increasing the mental health information available to clinicians across the province.

Ontario Shores Centre for Mental Health Sciences, located in the Central East Local Health Integration Network (LHIN), is a 326 bed hospital providing mental health and addictions care through specialized treatment, research, education and advocacy for those with complex and serious mental illness. Waypoint Centre for Mental Health Care, located in the North Simcoe Muskoka LHIN, is a 301-bed internationally recognized psychiatric hospital and forensic mental health research facility.

Increasing access to this type of information in health records helps ensure that health care is coordinated as patients transition to other services and supports within the system.

