



eDRUG PROJECT

Hospital Access to PharmaNet

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PharmaNet is a world class system that records all prescriptions dispensed in community pharmacies in British Columbia. The Ministry of Health already provides physicians in Emergency Departments and some medical practices with access to patient medication histories stored on PharmaNet. In January of this year, the Ministry expanded PharmaNet access to authorized health professionals working in hospitals and designated mental health facilities. Timing for implementation of this new service will vary based on the priorities and plans of each health authority or facility.

Hospital Access to PharmaNet (HAP) provides view only access to community medication information. HAP improves patient safety by streamlining the medication reconciliation process and reducing both the time to determine each patient's current drug treatment, and the need to call community pharmacies for medication clarification.

PharmaNet's strict privacy measures remain in place, including strong security, encryption of transmitted patient data, formal processes to control access and provisions for patients to lock their medication histories with a keyword. PharmaNet complies with the Province's Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

Health Authority Integration the First of its Kind in Canada

Both Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA) and Vancouver Coastal Health Authority, including Providence Health Care (VCHA/PHC), are "integrating" access to PharmaNet's medication information into their hospital information systems to improve the safety and quality of inpatient care delivery, improve patient care for ambulatory patients visiting hospital clinics, support patient transfer within and across health authorities and support medication reconciliation processes. There is a direct link between improvement in patient care and increased access to relevant clinical information. With integrated PharmaNet access, physicians, nurses and pharmacists now have more complete medication information about their patients from the inpatient medication profile and the external PharmaNet data.

VIHA has worked with their hospital information system vendor, Cerner, and has integrated PharmaNet access directly into their comprehensive Clinical Information System which delivers laboratory, radiology and inpatient medication information across the Health Authority. Physicians do not need to access another application to access PharmaNet data because it is directly accessible from the Cerner application they use every day for patient care and treatment. The VIHA/Cerner solution is the first example in B.C. and in Canada where a large hospital system directly and in real-time provides view access to a provincial drug repository.

From a care provider's perspective, VCH/PHC has "visually integrated" many sources of client data into its electronic health record, CareConnect. VCH/PHC has included PharmaNet drug data and private lab results via the BC-based Excelleris application as part of CareConnect. As of April 1, 2008, VCH/PHC has 11 hospital locations accessing PharmaNet data and is reporting many positive impacts on patient care.



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Patient Care Benefits Realized by VCHA/PHC & VIHA

Physicians – Having access to PharmaNet on a patient care unit supports the physician’s workflow during assessment and direction of patient care and enhances their clinical decision making process. Physicians are able to make more informed care decisions when they are provided with increased access to relevant clinical information such as community medication information from PharmaNet. The addition of community medication history to regionally available inpatient medications results in more complete information, supporting clinical decisions and improving quality and safety of care.

Clinical Pharmacists - Clinical pharmacists are no longer required to return to the pharmacy or satellite location to access a patient’s community medication profile. Having access from the ward improves clinical workflow and has resulted in more efficient use of clinicians’ time. Pharmacists can review a patient’s community medication profile and inpatient medications in a timely manner and make medication recommendations as required.

PreAdmission Clinic Nurses - When conducting pre-surgical interviews with patients, pre-admission nurses find that patients often cannot recall the names of medications they are taking and may not have their pill bottles on hand. By having direct access to PharmaNet, the nurse is able to review a patient’s medication history and simply confirm with the patient that the medication/dosage is current. When an anesthetist receives this more accurate information before the patient's surgery, there is reduced risk of adverse events. In the past there were often delays, due to the time required to follow up with the family physician or pharmacist to confirm a patient’s medication history.

Helping Hospitals Meet the Canadian Council on Health Service Accreditation (CCHSA) Standards

In January 2008, the CCHSA increased its accreditation requirements. Hospitals are now required to implement medication reconciliation in patient safety practices at admission, transfer, and discharge in order to become accredited. Hospital Access to PharmaNet helps hospitals meet the Council accreditation requirements by providing information that streamlines reconciliation of a patient’s community and inpatient medications.

Contacts

For information about access to PharmaNet for hospitals and designated mental health facilities, visit the Ministry of Health’s Data Access Services website at: www.health.gov.bc.ca/das/index.html

Or contact the Data Access Services team at: HLTH.DataAccessServices@gov.bc.ca

The Ministry continues to work on further enhancements to PharmaNet in support of the provincial Electronic Health Record, including more comprehensive medication profiles, ePrescribing and automating the PharmaCare Special Authority process. For more information on the eHealth Program visit the eHealth website at: www.health.gov.bc.ca/ehealth/index.html.