

Diabetes Dashboard

Electronic medical records:
helping physicians be more proactive
in fighting chronic diseases



Having information that's clear, user-friendly and oriented to delivering results can lead to improved patient management and earlier intervention in the area of chronic diseases such as diabetes.

In communities small and large across British Columbia (BC) and Canada, electronic medical records (EMRs) are showing the real benefits of tapping into technology in family medical clinics. TELUS Health EMR solutions help physicians collect and use patient information more efficiently. This helps greatly with overall organization of patient records, having information in one place that physicians can access from anywhere.

But it's the immediate and long-term promise of EMRs in helping patients and practitioners better manage chronic diseases that showcases how technology can support physicians' decision making and improve the care they deliver.

EMR at work in central BC

In the Shuswap North Okanagan, an area that includes the communities of Salmon Arm, Vernon, Armstrong and Lumby, 56 of the region's 130 physicians use an EMR powered by TELUS Health.

Dr. Keith Hepburn, a physician with the Shuswap Family Practice in Salmon Arm, has been using an EMR since 2010. Through the initiative of the Division, his EMR now includes a dashboard to identify and manage patients with diabetes or who may be pre-diabetic, as well as associated patient goals which he finds especially helpful. **Always running in the background, the dashboards allow Hepburn to immediately identify when a patient needs a particular test or screen.**

Especially with chronic diseases, "there are a lot of things we should be monitoring which can be really difficult," Hepburn says. When a diabetic patient comes in about something unrelated, he's able to quickly review the patient's goals to make sure everything is on track. "Without adding very much time to a visit, we can stay on top of things, something the patients really appreciate. With chronic diseases, if you catch them early and you manage them well, you prevent a lot of complications down the road."

Tracey Kirkman, executive director of the Shuswap North Okanagan Division of Family Practice, agrees. She also says the diabetes dashboard has given physicians in the region better overall knowledge of their patients.

"The success of the dashboard is that it has helped physicians actually understand how many diabetic patients they have on their patient panel, rather than having a vague idea. At the start of the project, the dashboard identified 368 patients with suspected diabetes across the region; over the four-month project period, 37 per cent were correctly diagnosed or caught early for pre-diabetic management."

Kirkman says having this information allows physicians to provide more preventative care. She also believes it helps better engage patients in the health conversation, allowing them to take more ownership over their own health — particularly in the case of Type 2 diabetes, which is preventable when managed.

“ There’s real potential, and just so much we can do with it. ”

Tracey Kirkman, executive director of the Shuswap North Okanagan Division of Family Practice

Seeing broader trends and overall benefits

Be it pre- or post-intervention, **information is power in the world of chronic disease management. But it’s how that information is presented and used which is where the real potential lies.**

“Clinicians have an overwhelming volume of information in their EMRs,” says Gayle Grout, outcome services manager with TELUS Health. “The Outcomes Dashboard works in concert with EMR tools to present practice insights, enabling doctors to better understand what’s happening in their practice and empowering them to make data-driven decisions to strengthen how patient care is delivered and managed.”

Better management of chronic disease is important in the short and long terms. As the population ages and more and more people are living with chronic disease, “they can lead fairly healthy lives if the disease is managed well,” says Hepburn.

For her part, in addition to the positive benefits for patient care and the overall cost savings that can result from earlier and more effective treatment in managing chronic diseases such as diabetes, Kirkman is simply excited about the difference technology can make in practices across the region.

“There’s real potential,” she says, “and just so much we can do with it.”

About TELUS Health

TELUS Health is a leader in home health monitoring, electronic medical and health records, as well as consumer health, benefits management and pharmacy management solutions. TELUS Health leverages the power of technology to enable better health outcomes for Canadians with innovative digital solutions that enable collaboration, efficiency and productivity for physicians, pharmacists, health authorities, allied healthcare professionals, insurers, employers and citizens.



For more information about TELUS Health, visit telushealth.com



telushealth.com

 **TELUS** | Health®

Information for Life