

Press Release

University Health Network and Toronto Community Care Access Centre partnering to provide seamless flow of important patient information

Toronto – University Health Network (UHN) and the Toronto Community Care Access Centre have launched a new initiative to integrate their computer systems so that healthcare workers can access important electronic patient information and coordinate care in a more seamless, timely fashion.

To improve the coordination of its healthcare services, and in acknowledgement of the changing landscape of electronic health information, the partnering organizations' information system departments will collaborate to establish a shared service to support the healthcare information needs of patients/clients and the respective organizations.

“This initiative represents a shift from the traditional systems approach, where institutions work in silos, to a model promoting collaboration and integration,” said Matthew Anderson, Chief Information Officer at University Health Network and recently appointed to the joint CIO position at Toronto Community Care Access Centre.

“Once we build this technology bridge to integrate confidential electronic patient records, it will mean healthcare professionals at both organizations will have enhanced access to information which will help streamline patient referrals and allow physicians and clinicians access to important clinical information about patients to enhance their decision making.”

By streamlining the referral process, care coordinators at Toronto Community Care Access Centre will be able to more quickly find important information and streamline the referral process for patients being discharged from hospital, freeing up access to important in-patient hospital beds, ultimately aiding in alleviating wait times in areas such as Emergency Rooms, and enhancing overall access.

“A key benefit for the Toronto Community Care Access Centre is that we have access to so much more for the same dollar amount. By partnering with UHN, we are significantly expanding the depth and breadth of our information system, while freeing us up to spend more time, effort and resources on our core business of providing health care services to the community we serve,” said Camille Orridge, Executive Director of the Toronto Community Care Access Centre.

The initiative also aligns with the Province's priorities of enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of community-based care in Ontario as outlined by Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, The Honourable George Smitherman.

Anderson says the initiative is also in keeping with the strategic priorities of both UHN and the Toronto Community Care Access Centre. One of the strategic directions of the Toronto Access Centre is to demonstrate leadership in health system change and integration, enabled by expanding partnerships and strengthening relations with key stakeholders such as hospital and long-term care facilities.

A strategic initiative of UHN involves continuity of care through information sharing with partner hospitals and community care organizations, enabled by providing them with better access to information about hospital services and pre-requisites for referrals.

“This is a perfect marriage that will create more seamless care for patients,” said Anderson. “We’re working together to ensure better communications among healthcare teams and to provide patients with more coordinated, quality and timely care both in hospitals and in the community.”

Among the benefits the Toronto Access Centre will realize from this initiative is access to strategic information management expertise on a real-time basis and access to additional resources in areas such as project management, technology and Service Desk services. In turn, the opportunity will enable UHN to facilitate the electronic sharing of key referral information among community providers and partner hospitals, providing patients requiring home care services with a record of their care as they move across the continuum.

Both organizations have long recognized the value of their relationship as partners in the provision of health care services to patients/clients and their families within, and beyond the Toronto community. The Toronto Community Care Access Center receives the largest number of its clients from UHN, and the largest number of referrals out of UHN are to the Toronto Access Centre.

University Health Network is a major landmark in Canada’s healthcare system, and a teaching partner of the University of Toronto. Building on the strengths and reputation of each of our three remarkable hospitals, Toronto General Hospital, Toronto Western Hospital and Princess Margaret Hospital, UHN brings together the innovation, talent and resources needed to achieve global impact on the health care scene and provide exemplary patient care.

The Toronto Community Care Access Centre provides health and social support services to residents living within the geographic area of the old City of Toronto. The community we serve is complex and challenging in its ethnic/cultural diversity and great variations in economic circumstances, ranging from great wealth to circumstances of poverty. We are located in a dynamic urban centre with the largest number of hospitals in the country and we are the largest referral site for patients from Toronto hospitals, 2/3 of whom do not live in our area.

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