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# Pharmacy Roadshow Success

Alberta Netcare, the Alberta Pharmacists' Association (RxA), and the Alberta College of Pharmacists (ACP) would like to thank everyone who participated in the "Straight Talk on Alberta Netcare" roadshow meetings.

The sessions were held in seven of the nine Alberta Health regions last April and May. The meetings provided insight into future system developments and described how Alberta Netcare, ACP and RxA will be working together to support Alberta pharmacists. The events also enabled participants to share their opinions and concerns with those who are directly involved in guiding the development of Alberta Netcare.

"I'd really like to emphasize the importance of the 'front line' pharmacists, in addition to licensees and owners, coming out to these events," says Greg Eberhart, ACP registrar.

By identifying the challenges, those who use the services can help Alberta Netcare partners make decisions that will result in practical benefits.

Alberta Netcare partners and developers will use the insights and concerns collected through these forums to improve services to Alberta's pharmacists. Margaret Wing, director of professional services for the RxA, reports an immediate response to the Roadshow insights. "Changes have already started to happen," says Wing. "There were concerns brought forward that we recognized could be addressed through the pharmacy software vendors—

those meetings have already taken place. The roadshow started a forward momentum that has been helping us take action."

Although this was scheduled as a one-time initiative, Alberta Netcare partners will support similar meetings on various topics in the future when necessary.

*The photographs below were taken at the "Straight Talk on Alberta Netcare" Pharmacy Roadshow events.*





## ALBERTA NETCARE IMPROVES CHRONIC CARE

At the Chronic Pain Centre in Calgary, Dr. John Clark, Dr. Chris Spanswick, and Chris Tremblay, RNBN, work as a team to improve the quality of life for those suffering with chronic pain. They find that using Alberta Netcare enables them to better assess their patients' medication needs, and helps them research each patient's history of investigations and drug use.

"We use various programs to give people skills to deal with their pain," says Dr. Clark. "Having access to the up-to-date pharmaceutical care and investigations saves us a lot of time in the sense that we don't have to go searching for those things. That means we have more time to help more people."

Nurse Tremblay agrees that Alberta Netcare saves time locating patient information. "It becomes important to know what investigations have been done, because if something hasn't been done, we can see that right away." She also reports that Alberta Netcare saves a lot of time on the phone trying to find complete dispensing records. "Our patients are often connected with other clinics; they have complex problems and multiple health care providers. If we have red flags going up during a prescription request, I can just log in to Alberta Netcare, see what they last had, when they last had it—the who, what, when, whys...it really works to our advantage."

"You can lay your hands on important, relevant information very quickly," says Dr. Spanswick. "Even if you're caught on the telephone, you can find the information immediately without having to go away and chase it down."

While the team is relatively new to using Alberta Netcare, all members see the benefits to using the system.

"It's going well, we really like the information we get," says Nurse Tremblay.

"We're just sorry we don't get everybody's information."

Previously their only two sources of this kind of data were the College of Physicians Surgical Triplicate, which provides a print out of information that can be up to three months behind due to manual data entry, and asking drug stores to manually print out a patient's prescription history.

"Patients often don't know their prescription history," says Dr. Clark. "Chronic pain is one of those areas where many things have been tried, and most patients can't remember what they've had. So having online and up-to-date access through Alberta Netcare is really helpful from a clinical standpoint."

One drawback is that not all pharmacies are uploading their information. "It's useful for about 70 per cent of the patients we see," says Dr. Clark. "I guess we're hoping that it all comes together. It is definitely an evolution."

"The other advantage is that it's useful for triaging," says Dr. Spanswick. "If you are treating patients and you're not sure what's going on, you can actually find out a lot of information on the system. You can find previous investigations and current medications, so you might prioritize them in a different way."

Dr. Clark applauds the fact that there is only one password needed to access the system. "I was

in B.C. yesterday, and a lot of their doctors don't use their online system because it's too cumbersome, it's too difficult, whereas this is quick to access."

"At first it might be a pain, but once you're used to the system, like any new thing, if you persevere it becomes quicker and quicker," says Dr. Spanswick. "I think of it as a very positive aspect in improving patient care, improving patient safety, and improving physician safety."



## New and Upcoming Learning Products for the Alberta Netcare Portal

**The Alberta Netcare EHR learning vision is to empower the users of the EHR to access and utilize training resources to address their own learning needs.**

**These new learning strategies will engage participants in both formal and informal learning, helping to establish a solid working relationship between the users of the EHR and Alberta Health and Wellness.**

The Training Environment Login page has a new look. Now called the *Alberta Netcare Learning Environment*, this page provides instructions on signing in and out at a Clinical 1 (physician) permission level. Eventually, additional sign-on levels will be provided for administrative, pharmaceutical and other clinical permission levels.

Plans to enhance the learning environment include the addition of different patient profiles so that users can practise with more realistic scenarios.

The following new learning products are available on the Alberta Netcare Portal Login page:

- **Getting Started** packages were created for all users of the portal. These packages are used by the Alberta Netcare deployment transition co-ordinators for training new users and may be accessed by more experienced users or by those training additional staff at their locations.
- **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)** are available to all users of the Alberta Netcare Portal. Getting Started FAQs and Person Directory FAQs have been online since August 2008.

**Visit the Alberta Netcare Portal Login page to view the new learning products and to access the Alberta Netcare Learning Environment.**

# IDENTITY AND ACCESS MANAGEMENT FOR THE HEALTH SYSTEM IN ALBERTA

Anyone who uses a computer as a part of his or her work understands the complexities and responsibilities associated with maintaining security. From the initial login, to applications, to email—security is something that many contend with every day. Even prior to starting, there is the registration of computer accounts, password creation, and other similar administrative tasks. These small housekeeping activities are important steps in protecting private and confidential information, but can easily detract from the user's primary duties.

The healthcare system in Alberta is no different. In fact, in many ways the health care profession is more complex than many other environments due to the number of organizations involved, the movement of staff between multiple clinical environments, and the number of computer programs used within the healthcare system.

For these reasons, Alberta Health and Wellness has initiated a number of "Identity and Access Management" projects designed to:

- reduce the administrative burden on users and organizations,
- improve the management of user IDs,

- integrate security across organizations to improve the login process,
- reduce security risks, and
- improve the protection of personal privacy.

There are a number of technologies that are designed to solve many of the frustrations associated with implementing security for computer systems within an organization.

It is important to understand the capabilities of each available technology and how they can be used within an organization to achieve the desired results. Not all solutions will work well for every situation—the selection will depend on the types of computer systems used, the problem, and the time available. The good news is that some of these tools (such as Enterprise Single Sign On) provide immediate relief for certain security challenges, while more complex solutions are on the way.

Alberta Health and Wellness has developed a roadmap to implement many of these technologies. In June, Alberta Health and Wellness collaborated with the health regions to purchase:

- Sun Identity Manager & Access Manager,

- Passlogix v-GO Enterprise Single Sign On software, and
- Carefx Fusion Desktop context management systems.

These tools will soon be available to the health regions and Alberta Cancer Board (under Alberta Health Services) and Alberta Health and Wellness. The Passlogix and Carefx solutions will also be made available to Physicians via the Physician Office System Program (POSP).

## Implementation Plans

Implementation of identity and access management software requires careful planning and effective resources. The implementation of the new software will occur at regional and department levels using a multi-phased project approach. After an assessment of the scope and potential impact on Alberta Health and Wellness, the project team will develop a plan outlining the steps for successful implementation. Stay tuned for more details!

For more information contact Robert Armstrong at:  
[robert.armstrong@gov.ab.ca](mailto:robert.armstrong@gov.ab.ca).

## New Global Person-Level Masking: Custodian Responsibilities

On September 1, 2008, an improved Global Person-Level Masking (GPLM) process was implemented within Alberta Netcare. It requires that all custodians (and affiliates) participating in Alberta Netcare actively consider individuals' requests to mask or limit the disclosure of their health information.

Participating custodians who have a current care relationship with the requesting individual are required to discuss with him/her:

- the risks and benefits of applying global person-level masking,
- how his/her health information will be accessed for treatment and care purposes, and
- unmasking that may occur without consent in specific situations.

Custodians must also consider ethical and regulatory issues related to applying the mask. A similar process exists for requests to rescind Global Person-Level Masking.

Once the discussion between the individual and custodian has occurred and the form is completed, the custodian faxes it to a central location in Edmonton where the GPLM will be set or rescinded. This process may take three additional business days.

The process documents are:

- *Application for Global Person-Level Masking—Form and Guidelines*
- *Authorization to Rescind Global Person-Level Masking—Form and Guidelines*.

The guidelines also provide reference material on GPLM and the process.

The forms and guidelines are available on the:

- Alberta Netcare Login page under "Administration Forms," and
- Portal 2004 Login page under "Notices"

**Note:** Custodians using Portal 2004 cannot view the presence of a mask, however, they are still expected to proceed with the masking discussion and complete the forms with individuals, when applicable.

If you have additional questions or need additional support completing a GPLM request, please contact the HIA help desk at **780-427-8089** (toll free 310-0000) or by email to: [hiahelpdesk@gov.ab.ca](mailto:hiahelpdesk@gov.ab.ca).

## Utilization and Adoption of Alberta Netcare Portal

The deployment priority over the next several months will be to increase adoption and utilization by registered users of the Alberta Netcare Portal, including the Pharmaceutical Information Network (PIN). Through the engagement of stakeholders, the Alberta Netcare Deployment Team will conduct a stakeholder benefits analysis, draft stakeholder communications and work directly with Portal sites to enable optimum patient care.

Key strategies will include:

- identifying opportunities to enhance existing workflow and business practices;
- developing a clear understanding of the uniqueness of each health care facility type and the human factors involved in the introduction of these new technologies; and
- identifying champions among physicians, pharmacists, nurses and

other authorized health care providers that can assist in promoting the benefits of Portal and fostering a peer-to-peer multidisciplinary approach.

Increasing the usage of Portal and related systems will result in greater availability of information for all of the authorized health care providers involved.

## DATA AVAILABILITY UPDATE

The Alberta Netcare EHR is pleased to report new data availability for all users. As additional data sources become linked with the EHR, users benefit by having a more complete picture of a patient's health history. This allows for better diagnosis and treatment, and ensures the safety of patient prescription use. It also provides quick access to valuable information, allowing users to spend less time searching for data. The following is an updated summary of available data:

**Patient Demographics:** as before, ID numbers and demographic data is available for anyone registered through Alberta Health with a Personal Health Number (PHN) or Unique Lifetime Identifier (ULI). Data may go back to 1993.

**Drug Information:** as of May 2008, 66 per cent of all prescriptions are being added to the Portal on a daily basis. The goal is to reach 95 per cent by December 2008.

**Laboratory Data:** as before, general, microbiology, and pathology data is available for all regions. Blood bank results from the remaining six RSHIP regions were made available as of June 19. Note that there are many regional variations of when certain specific categories of data became available. Many began reporting in 2007, but Capital Health data dates back to April 2002. Some tests conducted before October 1, 2004 only display the name of the test, not results.

**Diagnostic Imaging (DI) Text Reports:** Alberta Cancer Board reports from both the Cross Cancer Institute and Tom Baker Centre are available back to May 2006. Capital Health Region reports are

available back to July 2003, the RSHIP reports are available from June 2007 and Calgary Health Region reports are available back to September 2007.

**Transcribed Reports:** reports from both the Cross Cancer Institute and Tom Baker Centre, including: Physician Progress Notes, Admission Histories, Discharge Summaries and Initial Consultations, are available back to May 2006. Operative Reports from Cancer Surgery Alberta are available for the entire province as of June 14, 2007. For the Capital Health Region, Admission Histories, Consultations, Discharge Summaries, Operative/ Procedure Reports, Emergency Discharge Summaries, ECGs, Community Care Client Profiles and Letters are available as far back as July 2003. Please note that the specific availability dates for Capital Health vary among these report categories.

**Immunizations:** Capital Health Region records from Public Health sites are available back to January 1, 1995. These records do not include Emergency or Private Office immunizations.

Additional data continues to become available, including emergency room reports, event history, and electrocardiograms. DI images and Canadian Blood Services prenatal lab results will be added over the next six to 12 months as well as additional RSHIP and Calgary transcribed reports. Making immunization data available provincially is also under investigation.

Data availability information can be accessed from the login page. For detailed information about data from a specific category or region, please contact the Alberta Netcare Deployment Team at **1-866-756-2647** or email: [health.ehrdeployment@gov.ab.ca](mailto:health.ehrdeployment@gov.ab.ca).

## Contact Us

To contact us for more information call **1-866-756-2647** or visit the Alberta Netcare website at [www.albertanetcare.ca](http://www.albertanetcare.ca)



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