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A RESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE ON THE ALBERTA NETCARE PORTAL

Interview with Dr. Pamela Hebbard — Resident at Foothills Medical Centre and the Tom Baker Cancer Centre

The Student Education and Access (SE&A) Program is a collaboration between Alberta Netcare and post-secondary institutions to teach future health care providers to use the Electronic Health Record and integrate the Alberta Netcare Portal into their curriculum. For more information about training, please contact the Alberta Netcare Portal enrolment line at 1-866-756-2647.



Dr. Hebbard began her residency in general surgical oncology nine months ago; prior to that she completed a general surgery residency at Memorial University of Newfoundland.

Q: When did you first use the Alberta Netcare Portal (ANP) in your current role?

A: Pretty much right away. I've been here about nine months and began using ANP about eight months ago.

Q: What was your initial impression?

A: I thought it was a good idea. It provides a concise way to get patient information.

Q: What do you think about ANP compared to the other clinical information tools?

A: Compared to others I've used in previous roles, I liked ANP because it is provincial, meaning it is not limited to one hospital or one specific region. I felt it was very easy to use and self-explanatory.

Q: Can you give me a couple of examples of how you would use ANP in your work?

A: Most recently I've been using it for new patient consults. Sometimes the systems within the hospital or cancer centre don't have all the patient information I'm looking for, so I quickly turn to Alberta Netcare as a first resource for patient history.

Q: What would you say are the benefits of using ANP?

A: I like using one system instead of multiple systems and the speed with which you get results is also very good compared to other systems. With a diagnostic image for example, results are usually in Alberta Netcare within a couple of hours, whereas other systems that have to scan in the information usually take one

or two days. I also like the fact that it is easy to access anywhere because I work at different sites.

Q: What was the most challenging aspect of using or learning how to use ANP?

A: For day-to-day use, I found it very easy to pick up and use right away. Now that I'm comfortable with that, I'm trying out some more advanced features. For example, I was working on building a table for patients who have a lot of blood work – like hundreds of results, and couldn't quite remember how to do it.

I also really wish some of the results from past could be loaded into the system. For example, it would be nice to get pathology or imaging information from five years ago.

Q: If you could give advice to your peers about Alberta Netcare training, what would it be?

A: When I was first introduced to the Alberta Netcare Portal, I had a very practical face-to-face session at my orientation on how to use it – not too long or too short. It was fairly intuitive from there. Now that I'm starting to use other features it might be nice to have a refresher, but I'm very comfortable with the day-to-day features.

Q: If the Alberta Netcare Portal didn't exist, how would it affect your job?

A: If we didn't have Alberta Netcare I think it would be apparent that something like it was necessary. Having an online system, not paper, really helps. I think it is an absolute necessity these days to have a good repository of patient information and don't know how people would survive without it.

Q: Is there anything you'd like to improve about ANP?

A: As I mentioned earlier, it would be nice if certain key information from older pathology reports, operations or diagnostic images could be added eventually. I have become so used to having that instant information and I find tracking down key information from five years ago difficult at times.

Q: What advice would you pass on to your peers about ANP?

A: I would encourage everyone to use Alberta Netcare. As is the case when learning any system, it becomes easier to use over time. For me it is a reliable and succinct source of patient information.



POSP SEEKS MARKET KNOWLEDGE AND INTEGRATION TO PROVINCIAL EHR

2011 is an exciting year for the Physician Office System Program (POSP), as it embarks on a new market research project with Alberta community physicians. The Electronic Medical Record system (EMR) landscape has evolved over the past several years, and it is important for POSP to have a current understanding of physicians' perspectives. This project will focus on identifying why some Alberta physicians are still hesitant to adopt an EMR or one of the three qualified EMR solutions.

This information will be used to develop approaches and programs to respond to physicians' needs.

POSP is also working with Alberta's three qualified service providers (QSPs) to upgrade EMR functionality to improve integration with the provincial Electronic Health Record (EHR).

The first step has taken place: upgrade requirements have been provided to the QSPs and are being reviewed. EHR integration ideally means that EMRs can contribute to the EHR and download information from the EHR to make clinic-based records more complete.

These contributions will include sharing clinic visit summary information with the EHR, immunizations, clinical alerts and chronic disease management screening

information, as well as electronic referral capabilities. EMRs will also have electronic prescribing capability (a paperless prescription process) allowing physicians to digitally sign prescriptions within their EMR that can then be filled at any pharmacy in the province.

The goal is to have all of Alberta's community physicians using an approved EMR by March 31, 2014. POSP is working to meet this goal by understanding the needs and concerns of physicians not ready to make the move, and responding to those needs with steady improvements to EMR functionality requirements.



(left to right) Dr. Michael Chiu, Dr. Antonio Zaragoza and Dr. Edward Gee from Village Park Medical Clinic in Sherwood Park



ALBERTA LAUNCHES NEW ONLINE HEALTH RESOURCE — MYHEALTH.ALBERTA.CA

Albertans often turn to the Internet as a fast source for health information. The trouble with relying on Internet sources is that they are often unreliable. Popular health websites may be operated by undisclosed commercial interests and many provide conflicting recommendations, making it difficult to know what information to believe.

The search for trusted health information will be easier with the launch of MyHealth.Alberta.ca. A joint initiative between Alberta Health and Wellness and Alberta Health Services provides Albertans with online health content and tools that have been vetted by Alberta health professionals. Regular reviews and updates will ensure that all MyHealth.Alberta.ca content aligns with the Alberta health system and that it represents Alberta health knowledge, practices and expertise.

MyHealth.Alberta.ca offers valuable health information on nearly 9,000 health topics and a number of tools that can help Albertans make important decisions about their health. The online resources can prepare patients for an upcoming test or procedure, help them learn about medications they are currently taking, use a symptom checker or even find a health service location.

MyHealth.Alberta.ca will be continually expanded with new content and functionality. The next major development will be in 2012, when Albertans will be able to create their own personal health record.

A personal health record will allow users to enter and keep track of immunizations, medications, tests, blood pressure readings, weight and family health history. Under a username and password, Albertans can store this information privately, and still be able to view their record securely from anywhere they access the Internet.

Over time, MyHealth.Alberta.ca will continue to expand into a highly comprehensive source of trusted health information—making critical health information and tools available in one place.

Visit MyHealth.Alberta.ca to see how this resource can help your patients or clients.



MyHealth.Alberta.ca

ELECTRONIC ACCESS TO DIAGNOSTIC IMAGES COMING SOON

Provincial Image Viewer available this June

There has been great anticipation among the physician community for the new provincial diagnostic image viewer. The new Provincial Image Viewer is currently scheduled for June 2011 implementation, providing clinicians with access to images and reports for their patients through a secure online connection.

The Provincial Image Viewer has been specifically designed for general physician use, providing fast and simple access to images and results. The user interface is easy-to-learn and will launch directly from the Alberta Netcare Portal.

Functions of the Provincial Image Viewer include: Zoom and Pan, Magnify, Invert, Take Measurements, Side-by-Side Image Comparison, Rotate and Flip, and Image Overlay.

Physicians who already have access to the Alberta Netcare Electronic Health Record will gain access as soon as the integration is complete. Physicians who are not Alberta Netcare Portal users will have to enrol to access the Provincial Image Viewer.

How to launch the Provincial Image Viewer for Alberta Netcare Portal users:

1. Log on to Alberta Netcare
2. Select a patient, then browse the Clinical Document Viewer Tree (CDV)
3. Click on the DI text report or image icon.
4. When the DI text report is open, click on the image icon and the Provincial Image Viewer will seamlessly display the image(s) for that study.

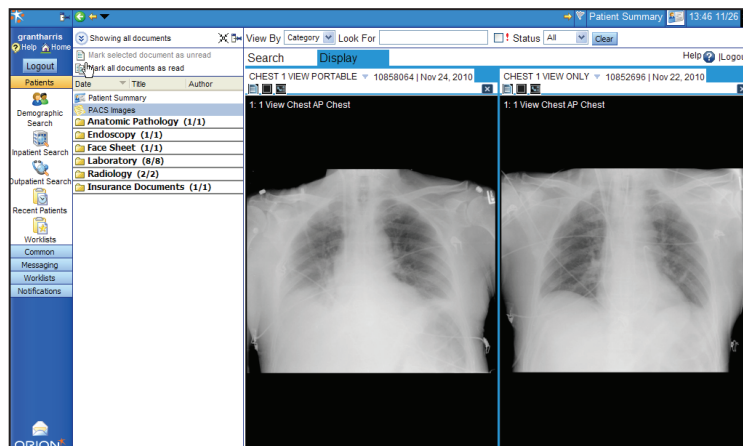
The release of the Provincial Image Viewer is scheduled for June 2011 as an update to the Alberta Netcare Portal. A number of factors could potentially impact this complex integration and

affect the release date. However, great effort is being made by the implementation teams to overcome any potential delays leading up to the targeted June launch.

Physicians who would like to receive the Provincial Image Viewer should contact the Alberta Netcare Deployment team:

phone: 1-866-756-2647 or 780-642-4082
email: health.ehrdeployment@gov.ab.ca.

The project team sincerely appreciates the patience of the physician community as they work toward delivering this exciting new clinical tool by June 2011.



Provincial Image Viewer embedded within Alberta Netcare Portal. This is an example of an image view, after an image icon has been selected (clicked on) from CDV tree. Users have the option of expanding the Provincial Image Viewer to fill the screen, which hides the Alberta Netcare Portal menus.



A PIN SUCCESS STORY — REAL-TIME MESSAGING WITH EMRs

Interview with Dr. Kolotyluk and Mirella Chiodo on the latest PIN to Med Access Integration

PIN integration refers to the real-time messaging between PIN and a physician's EMR. This communication enables physicians to both obtain information from and contribute information back to PIN.

Physicians can contribute prescriptions and information on patients' allergies and intolerances. Pharmacists use the prescription information and contribute their dispense information to the medication profile. All of this information is made available to other health service providers across the province, to support patient care.

PIN integration also improves the flow of information for physicians, as they can view a patient's provincial medication profile directly through their EMR, rather than launching the Alberta Netcare Portal. Like many early adopters, Dr. Kolotyluk's journey with PIN integration began years ago. Almost a decade later, he has something that really works.

"I began experimenting with PIN integration in 2002. Initially it was awkward to use and there were significant issues. The second iteration was in 2007. It was a little better, but still not ready for prime time. This time, in January 2011, it was apparent that performance and usability had been significantly improved," said Kolotyluk. "Considering how it was initially, this latest PIN to Med Access integration is the best I've seen. It now does what we had all wanted it to do originally. There is still a ways to go, but it's pretty darn good."

Achieving system integration can be a long and arduous journey. Initial releases often require significant improvements before they are highly useful for end users.

Mirella Chiodo, who manages IT needs for the University of Alberta's department of family medicine, echoed Kolotyluk's perspective on the initial stages of PIN to EMR integration.

"The biggest problem with the earlier releases was around performance," said Chiodo. "The system-to-system integration was more difficult to achieve and performance was too slow for practical use. Now integration is straightforward and the system performance is very good."

Kolotyluk credited the PIN integration team for the recent improvements for the PIN to

Med Access integration, pointing out the management of medication warnings is one area that has been improved.

"We're information junkies," said Kolotyluk. "The more information we have available to us, the better. The medication interaction checking is also a very important feature to help avoid negative medication interactions, especially for absolute known ones."

Chiodo and Kolotyluk are looking forward to certain improvements to make the PIN to Med Access integration even better in the future. Kolotyluk said the ability to download external prescriptions into the EMR, without having to re-enter them, would be helpful. Single-Sign-On is also a highly anticipated enhancement.

"In a clinical setting, re-entering prescription information may be aggravating. An improved training manual from Med Access would help as well," said Kolotyluk.

Kolotyluk encourages other physicians to consider adopting the system.

"It provides good information and will help reduce issues like adverse drug reactions and double doctoring. Many of the residual problems with PIN stemming back several years have been resolved now – so kudos to the Med Access team for all the improvements."

Physicians who do not have PIN to EMR integration should contact their EMR vendor for details on how to activate the connection. PIN integration is available from the three qualified service providers: Med Access, Practice Solutions, and Wolf.



Dr. Tim Kolotyluk practised as a rural family physician for 32 years in Alberta before recently joining the teaching faculty at the University of Alberta. His interest in medical informatics dates to the initial Medical Advisory Group Wellnet Initiative, and the initial Pharmacy Information Network pilot project.

Mirella Chiodo is the Informatics Co-ordinator for the Department of Family Medicine at the University of Alberta.

Her responsibilities include managing the departmental IT needs and EMR solutions for the four academic teaching clinics.

She also has a role as a member of the Alberta AIM Faculty assisting physicians and their teams on improving access, efficiency and clinical care.





CELEBRATING PHARMACY: A CENTURY OF EXCELLENCE

2011 marks a century of regulated pharmacy practice in Alberta. Alberta pharmacists are commemorating this milestone through year-long celebrations, with a key highlight being the Alberta Pharmacy Centennial Conference on May 20-21 in Jasper.

For a century, pharmacists have made very important contributions to the health and well-being of Albertans through their work in rural locations, urban communities, hospitals, academia and research. The centennial is an occasion to promote the profession's commitment to care, leave a legacy of pride and further develop the profession.

A centennial website has been launched at <http://pharmacy100.ab.ca>. The site invites Alberta pharmacists, health care professionals and the public to take the opportunity to look back and learn about centennial events taking place through the year. Readers can also share their stories and photos on Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com/AlbertaPharmacyCentennial>).

Congratulations Alberta pharmacists! May the next 100 years be as rewarding as the first!

LEARNING CORNER—NEW LEARNING MATERIALS NOW AVAILABLE!

The Alberta Netcare training team has developed the following materials that are now available in the Learning Centre:

- **PIN Overview e-Demo:** provides an overview of how PIN is used in the Alberta health system.
- **Portal Overview e-Demo:** provides an overview of the Alberta Netcare Portal and how it is used as part of an integrated health system in Alberta.
- **Person Directory e-Demos:** these instructional demos, show how to search, view, add or edit information in Person Directory. From newborns to visitors to Alberta, you can learn how to use the various Person Directory functions.
- **Person Directory e-Exercises:** in the event that the Learning Environment is unavailable, the e-Exercises allow you to practice the various functions of Person Directory.

NOTE: Some users are having difficulties accessing some of the multimedia learning materials available on the Learning Centre.

Updates are underway to ensure that all users can view and stream sound for eDemos and AHS tutorials. The updates will involve installing and updating Flash and streaming sound on both the Alberta Health Services and zone servers.

Regular updates to the learning materials ensure that they are consistent with the quarterly releases of the Alberta Netcare Portal and related applications. However, if you believe that something has been missed, please email the training team at ANPLearningCentre@gov.ab.ca.

Check the What's New topic to see what has been added or changed in the Learning Centre.

Suggestions Welcome

Suggestions for new content or materials may be submitted to the training team by emailing: ANPLearningCentre@gov.ab.ca.

Alberta
Netcare
ELECTRONIC HEALTH RECORD



For new Alberta Netcare Portal Users refer to Getting Started in Portal. You will find excellent material directed to the new user.

If you're not an Alberta Netcare Portal user and would like to be, please contact the ANP enrollment line: 1-866-756-2647 toll free or (780) 642-4082 in Edmonton

Learning (Training) Environment

Are you new to the Learning Centre?

Take a look at the topic *Where Do I Start?* It explains how to navigate the information in the Learning Centre.

For users whose roles require them to "Add a Person to PD" or "Add a Newborn to PD"—you may now practice *Adding / Updating a Person* or *Adding / Updating a Newborn* before you actually work in the live environment.

The Learning Centre is accessed through a secure link on the **Alberta Netcare Portal Login** page:

<https://portal.albertanetcare.ca/abNetcareLogin.htm>

and the **Learning Environment Login** page:

<https://portallearn.albertanetcare.ca/abNetcareLogin.htm>

Look for the following icon:





DATA AVAILABILITY UPDATE

The Alberta Netcare EHR is constantly expanding the data available to health service providers in Alberta, enabling users to view a more complete picture of their patients' health. This allows for better diagnosis and treatment and increases the safety and quality of patient care. By receiving quick access to patient information, users can spend less time searching for data and more time treating patients.

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

Drug Information: 90% of all prescription dispenses expected in an average month are being added to Alberta Netcare.

Laboratory Data: general lab, microbiology, pathology and blood bank data is available for all of the former regions. Note that there are many regional variations of when specific categories of data became available.

Diagnostic Imaging (DI) Text Reports: The Alberta Netcare Portal includes reports from the Cross Cancer Institute, Tom Baker Centre, and all of the former regions. Note that there are many regional variations of when specific categories of data became available.



DI text reports from X-ray Clinic at 142 Street (Edmonton) and Dr. Mayo were added in December, 2010.

Transcribed Reports: From the former capital 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. Reports from 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 2007.

Immunizations: the former Capital region records from public health sites are available back to January 1995. These records do not include emergency or private office immunizations.

ECG: the former Capital region ECG results are available for: Sturgeon Misericordia, University of Alberta, Leduc and Grey Nuns Hospitals.



ECG results from Health First Strathcona (Edmonton) were added August 2010 and results from Villa Caritas were added November 2010.

Current Alberta Netcare Portal users can access full data availability information from the Alberta Netcare Portal Login page. This includes the specific dates that information became available in the system. For additional details 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.

Contact us

To contact us for more information call **1-866-756-2647**, or visit the Alberta Netcare website at www.albertanetcare.ca



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Better Patient Information.
Better Care Decisions.