

IN THIS ISSUE

Allen Ausford, family physician and clinical professor, talks about the future of Alberta's referral experience.

We introduce **Path to Care: Leading Access Practices** - our sister program that is making strides in helping scheduled services manage patient access and improve business flow.

Health Information Management helps us understand **SNOMED CT** and why it's so great.

We announce a **minor delay** to the eReferral launch and what you can do in the mean time.

THE BIG PICTURE

Imagine a time when there is a single source to manage all referrals within Alberta, regardless of where you work or which EMR you use; where wait times are based on statistical evidence and can be compared before making a choice in care.

Imagine if all referral requirements were instantly available through a simple electronic form that integrated existing digital information such as lab and imaging results directly from source systems.

Imagine if a care provider or patient could track the status of a referral in real time as it was sent, received, triaged, booked and completed - all without the need of a fax machine or posted mail.

Imagine a system that could track end-to-end wait times from the initiation of a referral to its completion - and then use analytics to show bottleneck areas that can be identified and improved.

Imagine a system where the specific needs of the patient - whether it be virtual consults,

specific location of care, patient choice in access or timing - could all be met with up-to-date information before a referral is even generated.

This is the ultimate goal of the new



Alberta eReferral system, and it all begins with the upcoming launch of eReferral involving referrals to hip and knee replacement, breast cancer and lung cancer.

As a family physician caring for patients in this province for the last 33 years I am proud to be involved in this exciting initiative.

*Allen Ausford, MD FCFP,
Clinical Professor*

THE TIPPING POINT FOR ACCESS IMPROVEMENT IN ALBERTA

The tipping point... "that magic moment when an idea, trend, or social behaviour crosses a threshold, tips, and spreads like wildfire" (Gladwell, 2000).

Did you know that eReferral is a part of a broader program called Path to Care?

There are over 5000 clinics/scheduled services in Alberta Health Services with a dizzying array of referral and access processes. The **Path to Care: Leading Access Practices** team is working to improve access to scheduled services by providing resources to AHS scheduled services/clinics to improve referral and wait time measurement and management practices. These resources will help

TIPPING POINT CONT...

AHS clinics and services look at patient accessibility through a data lens—showing them how to use data to drive access process improvements. Results can be seen in care coordination and communication between providers, as well as identifying delays along the patient's care experience – all of which are crucial to ensure that all patients are seen for the right services at the right time by the right provider.

If you are an AHS scheduled service or clinic that is looking to understand where you stand in relation to AHS policy standards and expectations, begin with the **Access Assessment Tool**. This tool will provide a baseline assessment of your referral management, wait time measurement and reporting practices. When completed online, a score is provided that reflects your service's current practices. Based on your responses, you will be directed to specific areas in the Online Learning Resource to support improvement efforts.

If you are an AHS scheduled service or clinic and **want to improve access to your service**, check out the Path to Care **Online Learning Resource**. This resource was designed to

Leading Access Practices ONLINE RESOURCES

ACCESS ASSESSMENT TOOL:
<http://insite.albertahealthservices.ca/9875.asp>

ONLINE LEARNING RESOURCE:
<http://insite.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/pat/modules/pat/index.html>

WORKSHOP CALENDAR:
<http://insite.albertahealthservices.ca/pat/tms-pat-p2c-upcoming-eventsMar26.pdf>

allow free navigation, so you can jump to the specific information most important to you and your service/clinic. Learn about the timestamps or wait time intervals in the patient journey, find communication templates, refine your referral requirements, or find additional resources to help improve access to your service.

Introductory workshops are being held across the province to anyone who is interested in learning more about improving access to scheduled

services for Albertans. **Schedule a workshop** for your clinic/service or check the **Workshop Calendar** to see the next one in your location.

Peer influence is also a key factor in the tipping point. Check out **Path to Care** on Insite and attend a workshop to learn more. Be a part of the solution and help us create the tipping point for access improvement! For more information please email: PathtoCare@albertahealthservices.ca

WHAT IS SNOMED CT AND WHY DOES eReferral USE IT?

IMAGINE IF CHOOSING WHERE TO SEND YOUR REFERRAL WAS AS EASY BOOKING A FLIGHT?

THIS IS HOW WE HAVE IMAGINED THE eReferral HEALTH SERVICES CATALOGUE

The reason for referral is the starting point for the referral process, and search results should show all the care options available including physician, community or allied health services. To make this possible, we needed a standardized way of categorizing the specialty areas and reasons for referral. The Provincial Standards team in Health Information Management (HIM) recommended the Systematized Nomenclature of Medicine - Clinical Terms (SNOMED CT) as the best choice to represent symptoms (i.e. hip pain), diagnoses (i.e. Type 2 diabetes), or procedures (i.e. colonoscopy).

A **clinical terminology** is a set of standardized terms to record pa-
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SNOMED CT CONT...

tient findings, circumstances, events and interventions with enough detail to support clinical care, decision support, outcomes, research and quality improvement. They are designed to support clinical documentation needs at the



point-of-care and are known as "data input" systems as they provide a means to support entering and encoding clinical data in the health record using structured forms, radio buttons, drop down selections, prob-

lem lists and graphical notes. The "codes" are assigned in the background and may or may not be visible to the user.

SNOMED CT is an international clinical terminology standard used in more than 50 countries. It consists of more than 300,000

concepts and is recognized as the international clinical terminology of choice as it was specifically developed for use in electronic medical records (EMR) and electronic health records (EHR).

Classifications such as the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems, Tenth

Revision, Canada (ICD-10-CA) and Canadian Classification of Health Interventions (CCI) are used to assign numeric or alphanumeric code numbers to represent specific diseases, conditions, health

status and/or interventions. ICD-10-CA consists of 30,000 diagnosis codes and CCI consists of 18,000 intervention codes. Classifications are considered "data output" systems as they allow the detail of clinical documentation

for diseases, conditions, health status and/or interventions to be grouped into broad categories for secondary uses such as administrative, regulatory, oversight and fiscal requirements. The broad categories of classifications may not always meet the needs of all users, hence the need for clinical terminologies such as SNOMED CT.

Clinical terms, terminologies and classifications are intended to co-exist through mapping. The American

Did you know?
SNOMED CT has over 300,000 active concepts with unique definitions.

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UPCOMING WEBINARS

Join us online to learn more about eReferral and see it in action.

Date	Time
April 30	0730-0830
May 7	1200-1300

If you would like to attend a webinar, contact Erin Rohl at erin.rohl@albertahealthservices.ca



SNOMED CT CONT...

Health Information Management Pocket Glossary, Third Edition, defines mapping as the "creation of a cross map that links the content from one classification or terminology scheme to another." The benefits of mapping include:

- Reduced duplication of effort as health-related data collected for one purpose can be entered once at source and used multiple times.
- Linkage of multiple versions of code sets supporting the transformation of health-related data for multiple uses.
- Easier ability to migrate data to newer database formats and schemas.

The use of SNOMED CT will help when it comes to reviewing eReferral data for operational reports or research. Using standardized data will also help us to compare our programs and services across the province and will make it easier to integrate with other systems such as EMRs or scheduling systems.

For more information about SNOMED CT, check out this article: <http://insite.albertahealthservices.ca/him/tms-him-prov-nls-2014-02-14.pdf>
February 2014

Next Issue:

What is a referral pathway?

UPDATE: Minor Delay to eReferral Launch

The eReferral Launch planned for March will be delayed until later this spring. eReferral is dependent on a major upgrade to the Alberta Netcare Portal, which is delayed.

Once we receive confirmation that the Alberta Netcare Portal upgrade is successful, we will communicate the eReferral launch date.

When eReferral goes live, users can begin to create, submit, track and manage referrals for hip and knee joint replacement and breast and lung cancer.

1. **LEARN MORE** at albertanetcare.ca/eReferral.htm - eDemos, Quick Reference Guides, and newsletters
2. **TRY IT OUT** in the Alberta Netcare Training Environment - practice creating and managing electronic referrals along with other Alberta Netcare skills. Find the link on our webpage albertanetcare.ca/eReferral.htm
3. **ATTEND** an Information Webinar – watch a demo, join the conversation. To register, contact Erin Rohl erin.rohl@albertahealthservices.ca
4. **SIGN UP** for training. Contact Karen Branicki karen.branicki@albertahealthservices.ca
5. **JOIN** our mailing list. Contact Erin Rohl erin.rohl@albertahealthservices.ca
6. **FIND** provincial referral guidelines for hip and knee joint replacement referrals and lung and breast cancer referrals
 - Alberta Hip and Knee Replacement Referral Form albertahealthservices.ca/fm-09884.pdf
 - Breast Cancer Referral Guidelines albertahealthservices.ca/hp/if-hp-rf-breastcancer-referral-requirements.pdf
 - Lung Cancer Referral Guidelines albertahealthservices.ca/hp/if-hp-rf-lungcancer-referral-requirements.pdf