

## Hospital Access to PharmaNet —A stepping stone to the provincial Electronic Health Record

The eHealth initiative brings better, faster, safer health care to British Columbians wherever they are in the province. eHealth is an overarching term used to describe electronic health services delivered or enhanced through secure, shared Electronic Health Records (EHRs).

eHealth supports and enables a more effective, integrated and coordinated approach to information sharing among authorized health professionals and health organizations. The provincial EHR is an integrated record of a patient's medical information and will include information such as medication history, lab results, and diagnostic imaging information. Physicians, pharmacists and other health professionals will have authorized and secure access anywhere, anytime, to only that information in an individual's EHR that they need in order to provide safe and appropriate care.

eHealth goals:

- improved health care quality, safety and outcomes,
- increased service efficiency, productivity and cost effectiveness,
- enhanced service availability,
- increased satisfaction for citizens, patients and health professionals.

eHealth will place the utmost importance on the protection of personal health information and will comply with provincial government requirements and international standards to protect privacy and assure system security.

### Access to PharmaNet expanded throughout B.C. hospitals

***This eHealth service gives authorized health professionals access to patient medication histories from a hospital or designated mental health facility***

PharmaNet is a world class system that records all prescriptions dispensed in community pharmacies in British Columbia. The Ministry of Health already provides physicians in Emergency Departments and some medical practices with access to patient medication histories stored on PharmaNet.

The Ministry is now expanding access by offering authorized health professionals access to PharmaNet from hospitals and designated mental health facilities. Timing for implementation of this new service will vary based on the priorities and plans of each health authority or facility.

A number of measures are in place to protect patient privacy, including strong security, encryption of transmitted patient data, formal processes to control access and provisions for patients to lock their medication histories with a keyword.

Hospital Access to PharmaNet is just one of a number of initiatives being undertaken over the next three years to improve access to information and provide an Electronic Health Record that will link clinics, medical practices, hospitals, Provincial Health Services agencies, pharmacies and other sites where patients receive health care services.

## Access to PharmaNet expanded throughout B.C. hospitals (continued)

### **Benefits to authorized health professionals who access patient medication histories will include:**

- Reduced reliance on a patient's memory of the medications dispensed to them by community pharmacies. Access to PharmaNet provides an accurate and complete record of this information when challenges such as language barriers hamper effective communication between a patient and a health professional.
- Real-time, up-to-the-minute information on all drugs dispensed to a patient in the community, including medication prescribed to the patient by a specialist or a prescriber at a walk-in clinic. This information supports effective patient care and also enables quick identification of potential medication-seeking individuals.
- Online, 24x7 availability of patient medication information, reducing the need to call a pharmacy for clarification.

## How does this service work?

All information on prescription drugs dispensed at B.C. community pharmacies is captured on PharmaNet. Hospital and designated mental health facility access to PharmaNet allows authorized health professionals to use computers located in the facility to view a record of:

- all medications dispensed to a patient from any community pharmacy over the past 14 months; or
- the 15 most recent medications dispensed to a patient in the community.

To protect patient privacy, the hospital or mental health facility must obtain written consent from the patient for authorized health professionals to access their PharmaNet medication histories.

## Contacts

For general information on PharmaNet, visit the PharmaNet page on the PharmaCare website at:

[www.health.gov.bc.ca/pharme/pharmanet/netindex.html](http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/pharme/pharmanet/netindex.html)

For information about access to PharmaNet for hospitals and designated mental health facilities, visit the Ministry of Health's Data Access Services website at:

[www.health.gov.bc.ca/das/index.html](http://www.health.gov.bc.ca/das/index.html)

Or contact the Data Access Services team at:

[HLTH.DataAccessServices@gov.bc.ca](mailto:HLTH.DataAccessServices@gov.bc.ca)

The use of PharmaNet is not intended as a substitute for professional judgment. Information on PharmaNet is not exhaustive and cannot be relied upon as complete. The absence of a warning about a drug or drug combination is not an indication that the drug or drug combination is safe, appropriate or effective for any given patient. Health professionals should confirm information obtained from PharmaNet, and ensure no additional relevant information exists, before making patient care decisions.