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Canadian Healthcare Association
Association canadienne des soins de santé
75 years of service / 75 années de service

Policy Positions Regarding Issues addressed by the National Pharmaceuticals Strategy

ELECTRONIC HEALTH RECORDS & E-PRESCRIBING

(Approved by Board of Directors, June 2006)

In September 2004, Canada's First Ministers agreed to establish a ministerial task force to develop and implement a National Pharmaceuticals Strategy (NPS) and to report on their progress by June 30, 2006. The seventh action of the National Pharmaceuticals Strategy is to broaden the practice of e-prescribing through accelerated development and deployment of the electronic health record (EHR). CHA defines electronic health records and e-prescribing as *electronic systems for collecting, managing, and storing patient health information, the electronic health record (EHR), and for entering data to generate a prescription, e-prescribing.*

Policy Positions

- CHA strongly supports the development and use of the EHR and e-prescribing practices.
- Health providers, particularly physicians and pharmacists, should be involved in the development and implementation of electronic records.
- Organizations using electronic records should provide adequate protection of personal information.
- EHRs and E-prescribing should incorporate the principles of an electronic prescription database for recording dispensed pharmaceuticals and draw on the experiences of such existing provincial databases.
- Federal, provincial, and territorial governments and industry should provide sufficient and on-going investment to support the development and operation of electronic health records and e-prescribing.
- A forum should be established to bring together health system funders, managers, providers, and industry to exchange best practices (e.g., privacy protection).

Background

- The EHR and e-prescribing have the potential to enhance patient and system outcomes through better decision-making that improves patient safety, quality of care, patient satisfaction, and system effectiveness. These innovations may reduce the burden on patients and providers for collecting information, improve waitlist management and research by producing aggregate information that supports improved problem solving, and avoid medication errors and other adverse events.
- Canada Health Infoway is supporting the development of infrastructure to support the EHR, e-prescribing, and other health information technologies.
- Slower than expected progress on the development and adoption of electronic health information initiatives is partly the result of significant systemic obstacles including the physical infrastructure, needed practice changes, integration of technology into the workplace, and policies and procedures to address issues such as privacy, patient consent, and ethical use of information.

The Canadian Healthcare Association is a leader in developing, and advocating for, health policy solutions that meet the needs of Canadians.

17, rue York Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1N 9J6 (T) 613.241.8005 (F) 613.241.5055 www.cha.ca