

Real-Time Medication History Improves Patient Care While Saving Time and Money

Accurate Medication Reconciliation is Possible with the Right Tools

Medication management is critical for healthcare organizations nationwide. However, medication reconciliation is consistently cited as an error-prone and time-consuming process. Medication errors can cause treatment delays and put patients at increased risk for adverse drug events, hospital readmissions or even death. Lack of access to quality patient medication data is a frequent cause for these errors.

Providers need an accurate view of each patient's full medication history, in real time, within their electronic health record (EHR) workflow. This view supports them in treating patients quickly and confidently without having to spend time piecing together health histories.

Together, Surescripts and Cerner enable access to patients' comprehensive medication histories through *Cerner ePrescribe™*. The data is powered by the Surescripts Medication History for Reconciliation solution, which unlocks information from a nationwide data network of pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) and pharmacies to help improve medication reconciliation.

Two Healthcare Systems See Opportunities for Improvement

Cerner ePrescribe has enabled two leading health systems to take advantage of the robust Surescripts Medication History for Reconciliation solution. Both organizations serve large populations — Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center (TTUHSC) serves more than 2.5 million people in Texas and New Mexico and Advocate Health Care is the largest health system in Illinois with more than 400 care sites. Both have also struggled for many years with piecing together patients' health histories.

Before TTUHSC and Advocate providers began using an EHR-integrated, real-time solution to reconcile patients' medication histories, they heavily relied on patients' verbal accounts of their medication usage. Patients couldn't always remember their medications or dosages, so errors and omissions occurred.

Dr. Zack Mulkey, Chief Medical Information Officer and Associate Professor, TTUHSC, shared his experiences with verbal medication histories, "It is typically slower and leaves gaps in the record when a patient can't remember or is incorrect about the medications he or she is currently taking."

Dr. Anupam Goel, Chief Medical Information Officer and Vice President of Clinical Information, Advocate Health Care, agreed that "missed medications" negatively impact patient care. He also shared that the manual process of reconciling patient medication data "contributed to inaccurate information and data quality."

Gaps in a patient's medication history can have significant consequences. As Dr. Jack Dyer, Faculty Physician, TTUHSC, and Medical Director, University Family Physicians, stated, "[The] potential was always there to prescribe a similar or same medication to a patient already on a medication that was contraindicated due to interactions with other known meds."

Dr. Jack Dyer, Faculty Physician, TTUHSC and Texas Tech Physicians of Lubbock - Family and Community Medicine also said, "Interview time and reconciliation time were very time consuming. Often, the nurse or provider would have to contact a patient's pharmacy to clarify med history."

He further noted that time and money were lost later in the care process. "It caused delays for providers and nurses downstream when they had to correct errors that occurred at the onset of patient visits," said Dr. Dyer. If patients had adverse drug events, they may have been forced to seek additional costly medical care.

Real-Time Medication History at the Point of Care

As medication management frustrations grew, TTUHSC and Advocate turned to Surescripts and Cerner for help.

Surescripts Medication History for Reconciliation uses the massive, nationwide Surescripts healthcare information network, including pharmacies and PBMs, to pull relevant medication history data directly into the provider’s EHR workflow.

Cerner’s EHR, *PowerChart*®, aggregates data from Surescripts and presents it to care providers in a user-friendly way.

These two powerful, industry-leading technologies come together to deliver comprehensive medication history in real time at the point of care.

Improved Outcomes for Patients and Practices

With medication reconciliation workflow now in place at TTUHSC and Advocate, providers have seen a positive impact on patient care. According to Dr. Mulkey, “It can help verify medications that the patient cannot remember details about—making the record more accurate and patient care safer. Typically, providers use the External Medication History function when prescribing refills or reviewing medications from outside Cerner’s EHR.”

A handful of TTUHSC and Advocate physicians were asked, “How has Cerner’s external medication history data affected patient care (e.g. Is it reducing the number of medication errors, adverse drug events and/or readmissions?).” Physicians responded using a scale of one to five (one equaling no change and five equaling significant change). The average rating was 4.3, indicating how valuable the solution has been in facilitating improved care.

Some of the physicians surveyed reported finding an average of two to three additional medications per patient using the medication reconciliation solution. This correlates to the survey’s data quality response results. When asked how Cerner’s external medication history affected data quality (one equaling no change and five equaling significant change), the average response was four.

Providers are also appreciative of the time-savings they’re experiencing with Medication History for Reconciliation. Dr. Dyer reports, “For clinics that use it during the intake process, it can help streamline the reconciliation process, making it more efficient and accurate.”

From the survey results, it can be concluded that medication reconciliation has had a far-reaching impact on the healthcare ecosystem at TTUHSC and Advocate. Both organizations have traded lengthy patient interviews, pharmacy phone calls and incomplete information for a single source of accurate, reliable, real-time data—and the results have been rewarding.

To learn more about Surescripts Medication History for Reconciliation, visit <http://surescripts.com/products-and-services/medication-history-for-reconciliation>.

Curious about how much time and money your organization can save with this solution? Visit <http://surescripts.com/hospitalvalue> to enter your organization's information and access the return on investment (ROI) calculator to estimate your savings.