



Connect Care is an electronic clinical information system being implemented province-wide. The system gives healthcare providers a central access point to patient information, common clinical standards, and best healthcare practices. In many areas, Connect Care means moving away from a paper-based system and transforming to a system whereby information flows between patients and their healthcare providers.

Connect Care is being implemented in multiple launches to minimize disruptions for healthcare providers and patients. In 2022/2023, Launch 4 was implemented in May 2022 and Launch 5 was implemented in November 2022. Launch 5 of Connect Care was the project's largest launch to date as it was the first to involve sites and programs in each of the five geographic zones. Launch 6 and Launch 7 are planned for 2023/2024. For more information refer to the [Connect Care: Implementation Timeline](#).

Connect Care and IPC

AHS IPC is involved in all phases of planning and implementing Connect Care in AHS and Covenant Health facilities. Program staff and physicians work to determine how the system supports IPC-related aspects of patient care. Members of the AHS IPC Connect Care Working Group, which includes representation from each of the AHS IPC zones, are referred to as “subject matter experts”. These experts are recognized for their hard work in successfully integrating IPC principles into the planning and rollout of Connect Care.

The IPC-related benefits to patient care from Connect Care can be described in three main areas – communicable disease and antibiotic-resistant organism screening, patient management, and surveillance activities.

Communicable disease and antibiotic-resistant organism screening

AHS IPC designed tools in Connect Care to improve communication and continuity of care for patients with infectious diseases and related conditions. These electronic tools are embedded in the patient's electronic medical record and enable standardized antibiotic-resistant organism screening and management of patients. This information helps prevent exposure to infectious diseases and potential spread in facilities. Having electronic tools allows for easier updating of recommendations, which is a significant advantage over paper tools, and additionally provides the ability to monitor the use of the tools over time.

In 2022/2023, the methicillin-resistant *S. aureus* screening order was updated to better match the recommended screening sites of “Nasal and Inguinal” to reduce the volume of inappropriate swabs being ordered through Connect Care.

Patient management

Connect Care allows for real-time electronic alerts and notations that help infection control professionals and healthcare providers identify and manage patients who have confirmed or suspected infectious diseases and conditions. Recommendations for appropriate accommodations and need for additional precautions are communicated to frontline staff through the patient record.

In 2022/2023, work was completed to optimize IPC-related notifications and workflows. One example is that the IPC notifications were made more efficient by identifying potential communicable disease exposure events in outpatient settings in addition to inpatient settings. Another example is that the isolation workflows were updated to allow for better communication and more efficient and safe removal of isolation orders. This included listing the reason for isolation, standardizing isolation tasks between emergency and inpatient departments to support patient flow between settings, and improved instructions on discontinuation of isolation.

Streamlining communication regarding patient management

The IPC team is a diverse multidisciplinary team. Members come from multiple disciplines such as nursing, medicine, health inspecting, microbiology, medical technology, and epidemiology. This diversity presented a challenge in Connect Care when it came to designating roles as there was no consistency in professional designations. At times this caused confusion for patient care teams when orders were being placed within Connect Care. Starting in 2022/2023, all infection control professionals will be identified as an "ICP" in Connect Care. Two additional roles were also created – IPC Support Staff and IPC Surveillance Staff – to better reflect the type of information and security access required for other IPC staff.

Surveillance activities

With the introduction of Connect Care, patients' demographic information and microbiology results will be sent through an interface from Connect Care to the IPC surveillance platform; work is underway to improve the provincial IPC surveillance platform for that new functionality. This data provision will improve the efficiency of surveillance activities for infection control professionals by quickly identifying potential cases and eliminating common data entry errors.

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