FACTS & FAQs

Home to Hospital to Home Transitions Guideline

IT Enablers

Four information technology (IT) systems help healthcare providers improve the way patients transition between home, hospital and medical home: Netcare, Community Information Integration and Central Patient Attachment Registry (CII/CPAR), Connect Care, and eDelivery. Read on to get the facts on each system, and for answers to common questions about the impact of IT systems on transitions in care.

Primary Care Alberta

Facts on information technology (IT) systems that enable transitions in care

Netcare

What is it?

- The provincial Electronic Health Record (EHR)
- A secure and confidential electronic information system that contains Albertans' personal health information
- A system where health professionals can access and input patient information by registering as an authorized user
- Managed by Alberta Health (Government of Alberta)

How does it work?

- Think of it as a sort of filing cabinet. Netcare collects information from multiple independent health systems to create a single integrated patient record.
- Clinical data is collected through point-of-service systems (in hospitals, laboratories, testing facilities, pharmacies and clinics) and is sent through secure messaging to provincial repositories and information systems.
- When a health professional logs on to Netcare and searches for a patient record, the portal retrieves all the available information from provincial systems and presents it as a unified patient record (from the Netcare website).
- Netcare uses Connect Care as one of the inputs to form each patient's provincial Electronic Health Record.
  Note: Netcare is not a single database, but a network of data repositories and information systems.

Community Information and Central Patient Attachment Registry (CII/CPAR)

What is it?

- CII/CPAR is a joint project between the Alberta Medical Association, Alberta Health and Alberta Health Services.
- It's an electronic information system that integrates community electronic medical records (EMRs) with two-way data flow to Netcare.
- It transfers select patient information between community (primary care) EMRs and other members of the patient's care team through Netcare.

How does it work?

- CII/CPAR captures the confirmed relationship of a primary care provider and their paneled patients (a defined group of patients assigned to a specific physician or clinical team).
- CII/CPAR shares important healthcare information, including consultation reports, between the patient's primary care provider and other providers in the patient's circle of care.
- It sends eNotifications directly to a community EMR when that care provider's patient is admitted or discharged from any hospital in Alberta.
- It provides panel conflict reports that help primary care providers coordinate attachment and care for shared patients.

Connect Care

What is it?

- A new way of using and sharing health information
- Supported by a common clinical information system that brings together legacy health information systems used by AHS and affiliated organizations
- Supports healthcare teams and patients with a more complete patient health history and improves consistency in care for Albertans. AHS is putting Connect Care in place at AHS and partner sites across Alberta.
- AHS's provincial legal record of care. The goal is to provide one record per patient, accessible by healthcare professionals at any AHS site.
- A single access point for AHS-managed healthcare information in Alberta
- Gives Netcare the information that forms each patient's provincial electronic health record

How does it work?

- It ensures informational continuity, efficiency and improved health outcomes in AHS by reducing the number of individual health information systems in Alberta to one.
  Note: Although Connect Care is not yet accessible to community providers outside of AHS sites, including non-AHS primary care clinics, work is underway to broaden its reach.

eDelivery

What is it?

- eDelivery is a secure AHS service to electronically deliver patient results like laboratory tests or diagnostic imaging to an electronic medical record (EMR).

How does it work?

- eDelivery delivers results and reports to each clinic's account four times a day, seven days a week. Community providers may be able to pull this information into their EMR, or the EMR vendor may have scheduled times for making this information available.
- eDelivery sends several kinds of summative notes (admitting histories, discharge summaries, consultation reports, etc.) to community providers directly, through their EMRs.
- eDelivery uses the provider identifiers listed in the results/report documents to determine delivery location.
  Note: not all results are available through eDelivery at this time; AHS is continuing to add new data and reports to the service.

FAQs on IT systems that enable transitions in care

Questions	Answers
As a primary care provider who already admits my own patients to hospital, do I really need CII/CPAR?	Yes. For providers in the community, CII/CPAR offers benefits well beyond admit and discharge notifications. It's true that one of the key benefits of CII/CPAR is alerting primary care providers to their patients' admission to hospital, but this IT system also offers the following benefits for primary care providers: • CII/CPAR provides reports that help manage your panel of patients—including conflict reports that indicate if your patient has more than one community provider. You will also receive a Deceased Notification that will alert you if your patient passes away. • CII/CPAR allows you to contribute to your patient's Netcare record through the Community Encounter Digest (CED) or, possibly, through consult reports. • CII/CPAR enables you to participate more actively in your patient's healthcare journey during hospital stays. If the hospital team can open your patient's CED, the team will have a much better picture of your patient's full health story. The result is better care continuity. • CII/CPAR enables you to declare and share the established primary care relationship between you and your patients with the system. CPAR will inform Netcare and will route notifications back to your electronic medical record (EMR) when one of your patients is admitted to, or discharged from, an emergency department or hospital. **Note**: As more providers join CII-CPAR and begin submitting panels, this may lead to patients with multiple attachments across several clinics. This can disrupt continuity of care for the patient if there is no clear responsibility for their longitudinal care.

When will my local hospital get Connect Care?	You can find the most up-to-date timeline for the Connect Care roll-out here: Connect Care: Implementation Timelines (albertahealthservices.ca).
Is the Connect Care timeline in jeopardy because of the COVID-19 pandemic?	AHS leadership temporarily delayed some Connect Care launches in the early part of the pandemic, but AHS is fully committed to implementing Connect Care and has moved forward with several launches during the pandemic. AHS is continuing the implementation as planned for all future launches.
Will Connect Care replace Netcare or make Netcare obsolete?	No. Netcare is our province's electronic health record and will continue to be the main repository for patient health information after Connect Care is fully rolled out. Netcare is like a one-stop shop for health information, drawing from multiple sources, including Connect Care, lab systems, community providers, e-referrals and pharmacies. Connect Care, on the other hand, is not designed to host aggregated patient information. In fact, Netcare will be enhanced by additional provincially standardized summative documents sourced from Connect Care, such as emergency department summaries and in-hospital consultations. Netcare is also enhanced with new information from CII/CPAR, including patient encounters through the Community Encounter Digest in the new Community folder, and with community specialist consultation reports. Connect Care, CII/CPAR and Netcare work together to improve the way patient information flows between care providers.
Will there be a lot of overlap/redundancies between the IT systems?	Like specialist physicians, each IT system has its own "skill set." Those skill sets overlap slightly, but each system offers functionality that the others do not. And the full range of benefits can only be realized when the four systems work together, giving providers the right information at the right time. Whether a provider is working in AHS or a community clinic, the four IT systems allow providers to access the information they need through Connect Care and Netcare or the community EMR and Netcare, depending where they are.

	In community clinics CII/CPAR assists in automating some workflows in the clinic EMR (sending panel information to Netcare and receiving notifications). AHS and its partners at Alberta Health and AMA are constantly working to find the best workflows to take advantage of the four systems' assets.
Will Connect Care be the record of care for primary care?	There are no plans to extend Connect Care beyond AHS-affiliated sites at this time.
Do acute care sites need to be on Connect Care for primary care to receive admit and discharge eNotifications?	No. Community physicians participating in CII/CPAR receive admit and discharge notifications regardless of whether the patient is visiting an AHS facility that's on Connect Care or a legacy system. It doesn't matter if the facility is on Connect Care—CII/CPAR will still function and primary care providers will still receive eNotifications.
If I have the provider portal, do I still need to participate in CII/CPAR?	If you are a community physician using a conformed EMR, we strongly recommend that you participate in CII/CPAR. It's an excellent way to communicate to hospital teams who your confirmed patients are, and to get patient information to the acute care team when your patient is in the hospital. It's the only way to contribute to the Community Encounter Digest, and get eNotifications directly into your EMR. The portal does not do those things.
As a primary care provider, will I get any benefit from Connect Care?	Yes. Connect Care standardizes how we document information across the province, bringing hundreds of legacy systems together into one common platform. Information we provide to the community from AHS facilities will be much more consistent and reliable, eliminating regional variations in information systems. For example, discharge summaries are often handwritten and are sometimes faxed or scanned and submitted to Netcare, but with Connect Care, discharge summaries are legible, include more information, are faster to complete, and have consistent standards of information.
How can I make sure I am notified when any of my patients are admitted to the hospital?	Make sure you are enrolled in CII/CPAR. You will get notifications about patient admissions and discharges directly to your EMR.

What happens when a patient sees several primary care providers? How is the Community Encounter Digest populated?	When a patient sees several primary care providers (e.g., Allied Health staff and specialists), information from all of those CII/CPAR-enabled care providers populates that patient's Community Encounter Digest (CED). Each patient has one CED that is populated by any CII/CPAR- enabled provider who has seen that patient. All participants in CII/CPAR can contribute to the patient's CED to create that rolling snapshot of care received in the community over the last 12 months. This includes providers of episodic care and longitudinal primary care. It is CPAR which tells the system which physician(s) or nurse practitioner(s) are the patient's primary care provider.
Will hospital staff be able to review my patient's plan of care?	The ability to share plans of care through Netcare is still in early planning stages and is not yet in the development stage. Eventually, CII/CPAR will allow primary care providers to upload patient plans of care into Netcare, where acute care teams can see them. Note that a patient summary is in development for CII/CPAR. This will allow participants, including primary care providers, to submit a curated summary of the patient's record to Netcare.
Are goals of care visible in Netcare?	Goals of care have been identified as a future enhancement to CII/CPAR. The plan is to enable community providers to submit goals of care to Netcare, so other providers can view them.
How does eDelivery differ from Netcare?	eDelivery is an AHS service that "pushes" patient information, such as lab tests and diagnostic imaging, directly to a provider's EMR. Netcare requires a provider to log in and "pull" those patient results manually—they have to browse the patient's Netcare chart to find and review results.

How can I get more information on the IT systems that enable transitions in care?

The Transitions in Care team (Home to Hospital to Home Transitions Guideline) is happy to answer any questions and you can reach us at:

PCA@primarycarealberta.ca.