Connect Care: Creating Epic Changes

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Lindsay Gilbert

DISCLOSURES:

- I have no current or past relationships with commercial entities

- I have received an honorarium from PTSA for this learning activity

Lindsay Gilbert

A little about myself

- I've worked for Alberta Health Services for almost 11 years and currently work at the Red Deer Regional Hospital

- I was an Implementation Lead for the Connect Care Project for Central Zone Pharmacy for a year and a half

- I worked retail for 4 years prior to AHS

- I'm married with a new baby born in July so currently on maternity leave

Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this activity, participants will be able to:

- differentiate between Connect Care, Epic, and Willow

- identify the role of Connect Care in community settings

- Implement the use of Connect Care in their own care as a patient

What is Connect Care?

Connect Care

- The project as a whole
- Includes 9 different launches that began in November of 2019
- Two launches per year for different areas across the province

Epic

- The physical system all AHS sites will be moving to
- Epic is used in many different countries all over the world

Willow

- The pharmacy specific application of Epic
- Each area has their own application and they all interconnect
- Pharmacy's is named willow because ASA originated from willow bark

What can Epic do?

- In my role as an implementation lead, I was part of a team that helped decide how we wanted Epic to function for us as a zone
- We made decisions related to topics like dispense logic (where an item is dispensed from), cart fills (oral and injectables), inventory (what is in each inventory), and many more
- Epic takes a lot of guess work out of the equation when it comes to dispensing in pharmacy
- Prior to Connect Care, Pharmacy Technicians would do order entry to ensure the correct product was entered onto a patients profile
- This has been a huge learning curve for everyone, especially physicians
- Some control was lost during this transition in that Epic makes a lot of decisions for us now. We are able to adjust some decisions made by Epic, to an extent, by adjusting which medications are in which inventory

How does it work?

- Physicians place the order using an orderable – Ex. cefazolin 2 g IV q8h
- Epic will decide to dispense the correct dispensable – Ex. cefazolin 2 g in D5W 100 mL q8h
  - This is based off something called mapping. Epic goes through a series of "what ifs" to determine exactly what product will be dispensed based off route, patient age, and available products
- A pharmacist will verify the order
- Each order produces a label that has a barcode
- The order will go through a process called Dispense Prep where the label is scanned as well as the medication to ensure it is being filled correctly
- The order must then be checked through the Dispense Check function where you can see exactly what took place during the Dispense Prep function and by who
- Next, the order is tracked within Epic by scanning the label and telling the system how the medication got to the unit

How does it work? (continued)

- All of these steps that take place within pharmacy, ensure the patient receives the correct medication
- Each patient has a wristband that has their personal information on it as well as a barcode
- When nursing goes to administer a medication, they must scan the patient barcode and then the medication
- Each step is tracked within Epic so everything is traceable
- As you can see, there are many more safety features in place with Epic that should eliminate medication errors
- Once the first doses are filled, Epic will populate the order onto a cart fill that automatically runs at a pre-determined time
- Epic will decide which inventory to dispense from – dispense logic

How is Connect Care helpful in community settings?

- Community pharmacies do not use Epic
- Epic creates a complete picture of a patient's level of care while in hospital
- Because the end goal is for the entire province to be on one system within the hospital, if a patient transfers from Edmonton to Red Deer, for example, nothing is lost in transition as it is all electronic
- When patients are discharged, print outs from Epic are given to the patient and community pharmacies
- This should eliminate transcription errors
- It will give your community pharmacy a snapshot of what occurred while you were in hospital without any guess work

How can you utilize Connect Care as a patient?

- Sign up for My Health Records
- When you have an interaction with a facility that is on Connect Care, they will ask you if you want access to your Connect Care profile
- This will give you access to your health records, directly from your phone
- You can see things like x-rays, lab work, appointments, etc.
- This makes it easier for you to be more involved in your own care than ever before
- Parents can access their children's records
- Legal caregivers can have access to records when needed

What would you do with more access to your own information?

- How do you think this would benefit you personally?
- Do you have an instance where it would have been beneficial to have access to your own information at your fingertips?
- Do you take care of someone that requires you to access their personal health information?

Personal Example of Connect Care in my own life

- My mom was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer at the beginning of March of this year
- She had surgery towards the end of March
- While in hospital after surgery, she was getting notifications to her phone with lab work results before any health care professional had a chance to talk to her
- She's a retired lab and x-ray technician so she was able to decipher the results and know what was going to happen because of them
- She was able to see appointments that had been made prior to her even receiving the phone call to notify her of the appointment
- It gave her piece of mind to have such involvement in her own care
- I asked her what her thoughts were on Connect Care and she said "It's great!". Her only concern was how far people could potentially take it without having any knowledge of what certain results mean

Summary

- Connect Care is a province wide project within Alberta Health Services that is implementing a new computer system called Epic

- Connect Care will help eliminate discrepancies between hospital stays and community pharmacy upon discharge

- Patients now have more access to their own personal health information than ever before

Thank you!

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