



PRESS RELEASE

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Healthconnect Selects Surescripts to Reduce Medication Errors

Community health information network provides medication fill data through nation's largest clinical network.

Houston, Texas (November 20, 2013) – Healthconnect announced today that it is among the nation's first community based HIEs to select Surescripts services to make prescription and medication fill data available to area hospitals through its cloud-based portal. This agreement will help area providers to reduce adverse drug events (ADEs) resulting from incomplete and disparate medication records. Physicians caring for patients in an inpatient setting will be able to independently and objectively confirm which medications have been prescribed to a patient and which prescriptions have actually been filled. The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality estimates that some 770,000 injuries and deaths occur each year due to adverse drug events; approximately 18% of those may be attributed to inadequate availability of information according to a study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA).

Lamar Pritchard, Dean of the UH College of Pharmacy explains the clinical impact of Healthconnect's data access, "When a patient is admitted through the ER, the clinical care team may have little or no access to a patient's prior medication history. If the patient had been admitted before, the hospital may have a record of medications from that time; but there is no way of knowing what has been prescribed or purchased for the patient since that prior hospitalization. Ready access to medication fill data helps the care team in the reconciliation of medication lists to help reduce potentially life-threatening errors due to allergies or interactions."

From the perspective of a physician in the emergency room, access to medication histories can make all the difference in the world, says Dr. Shkelzen Hoxhaj, chief of emergency medicine for Harris Health System's Ben Taub Hospital, an elite Level I Trauma Center and one of the busiest in the country. "More patients than you would expect cannot remember all the medicine they are taking and even when they do, their recollections may not always be accurate. Even when patients are unconscious, if we have some form of identification, we'll be able to look them up through Healthconnect and have a better idea of what meds they're taking."

David Yakimischak, Surescripts executive vice president of Medication Network Services, underscores the organization's enthusiasm for their work with Healthconnect, "Together we will help facilitate cost reductions and improve the quality of healthcare. Surescripts assists healthcare providers in closing communications gaps across the continuum of care to achieve enhanced patient outcomes."

Healthconnect began exchanging live patient data in April of 2013 and now serves 266 clients many of whom include the area's major health systems, accounting for 30% of the discharges in the 20 county-region. The organization is running one of the country's first query-based exchanges with a strategic focus on the inclusion of ancillary services data. By 2017 Healthconnect expects 80 hospitals will be participating in the network.

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About Greater Houston Healthconnect

Greater Houston Healthconnect is an independent, community-based organization responsible for enabling information exchange among healthcare providers in a 20-county region. It is tasked with mobilizing healthcare information electronically across organizations to enhance the safety, quality, and efficiency of care and improve information access throughout the region. Key stakeholders include healthcare providers, payers, employers and the community as a whole. For more information, visit <http://www.ghhconnect.org/>.

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