



Integration through Information Communication Technology in Home Care

Key Findings

This report is a summation of the observations and findings arising from the project undertaken by the Canadian Home Care Association (CHCA) in partnership with Canada Health Infoway in order to better understand the potential of and readiness for Information Communication Technology (ICT) in the home care sector across Canada.

The opportunity to define where the ICT opportunities lie captured the attention of home care leaders from all jurisdictions.

Examples of technology applications being tested in Canada include: remote monitoring to support client self-management and leverage the home care work force; communication between providers and the client and health care team through portals, emails and data file transfers; standardization of care through care management systems and consistent data collection; and automation of business processes within home care organizations. ICT helps to improve the care at the point of delivery and the quality of life for those requiring home care. For the home care provider, ICT improves the ability to see more patients, decrease paperwork and access the right information at the right time enabling collaboration with other providers. Effective application of ICT ensures that the system is used in the most appropriate and efficient way while improving the ability to measure, assess and manage health care.

As the health system continues to evolve through the implementation of the electronic health record and other information technology initiatives, it is imperative that governments undergo a paradigm shift and recognize the need for strategic investment in home care. It is time to address the disproportional ICT investment in the hospital sector by investing in home and community care. Technology must support the evolution of community based health care that includes both home care and primary care. There exist real opportunities to increase efficiency of information exchange across the entire health care system; reduce errors, duplication and administrative costs; achieve more accessible diagnostic results more quickly; improve the quality and coordination of care and improve the capacity to support individuals to remain independent at home wherever that may be.

The CHCA therefore makes the following recommendations to policymakers, funders and home care leaders to support ICT implementation in home care:

- Invest, as a priority, in technology solutions that support identified linkages between primary health care teams and home care to enable improved integration, communication and collaboration.
- Invest in the implementation of an electronic clinical information system for home care that includes all elements of service delivery and is available at the point of care, wherever that service is provided.



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- Host an interdisciplinary roundtable to determine the key information / data elements of an integrated electronic health record that includes information that is “pushed” and “pulled” from home care.
- Support demonstration projects that enable the introduction of consumer based technologies (e.g. point of care tools) that empower the consumer, improve access and sharing of health information with the health team.
- Support home care programs/providers to implement technology applications for administrative processes (to support monitoring, evaluation and planning of home care services) as a basic minimum requirement.
- Establish linkages between the electronic clinical information system for home care and the broader health care system (e.g. acute care, long term care, primary care).
- Leverage ICT applications (e.g. telehealth in all its forms) as a key strategy for managing risk for individuals remaining at home as they age.
- Provide forums to champion and leverage local ICT successes and broadly disseminate strategies to advance adoption in other communities.
- Support research into the outcomes and effectiveness of new technology applications for home and community care and its impacts on health human resource utilization and client empowerment.

For more information about this report or other CHCA initiatives we invite you to visit our web-site at www.cdnhomecare.ca or contact us at the Canadian Home Care Association at 613-569-1585.