

Three Ways Data Interoperability Helps Manage the Growing Opioid Crisis

Exclusive Hospital and Health System Executive's Bulletin

What role does your health system and your providers play in helping address the almost 100 daily opioid-related deaths that occurred last year?

With nearly three-quarters of a million (~646,000) opioid prescriptions dispensed daily in the US, the opioid problem in the US is a public health tragedy. However, healthcare data interoperability might just be a silver bullet to improve the management of the opioid epidemic.

As you evaluate programs within your facilities to mitigate opioid abuse and misuse, please consider adding one or all of these three effective ways to leverage data interoperability to improve opioid outcomes.

#1 - Connect to Your Local or Regional HIE

Regional HIEs have been increasingly aggregating medication data and making it available to local and regional participants. Many are even facilitating access to state-led Prescription Drug Monitoring (PDMP) programs and providing enhanced clinical workflows. HIE data provides useful medication, prescribing and healthcare service utilization patterns. Providers within your organization can use this data to help identify patients seeking opioids - especially in your local area. Take steps today to connect to a Health Information Exchange within your community.

#2 - Connect to eHealth Exchange & Participate in Carequality with the Sequoia Project

To further enhance medication history access, the programs available with the Sequoia Project (such as Carequality and eHealth Exchange) give your providers the ability to query other participating care facilities for historical patient encounter and clinical data. These programs give broader access to a patient's longitudinal clinical data, including federal partners such as the DOD and the VA. These programs are also very helpful when you don't have a local or regional HIE providing prescription history. Investigate eHealth Exchange and Carequality to see who you can connect with to enhance access to prescription history.

#3 - Implement Encounter Notifications for At-Risk Patients

Increasingly, you are providing care to patients for which you are bearing more risk. It is prudent for your care managers and/or physicians to understand what visit-based and other care resources are being utilized by these patients. Establishing encounter notifications for these at-risk patients can be incredibly beneficial. Encounter notifications between your facilities, community clinics, and others will alert care managers and providers of all encounters system-wide. As potential opioid seekers flow through various facilities, your providers gain insight into their behavior and can make appropriate care decisions.

Ideally, your organization should be implementing each of these strategies to cast the widest and most comprehensive data net around the opioid epidemic. You will find the visibility into patient data beyond the static medical record or the patient's verbal history will be enlightening. And, your providers will gain confidence knowing they have a collective dataset of information from which to make the very best decision for health and wellbeing of the patient.

Taking action on these three interoperability initiatives can literally save lives.

About this Bulletin:

This bulletin informs and challenges hospital leaders to consider expanding how they tackle vital healthcare issues such as the opioid problem in America. It highlights approaches associated with healthcare data interoperability including strategic planning and operational enhancements for both acute and ambulatory settings. The bulletin is a publication of [Zen Healthcare IT](#), champions for data interoperability and healthcare system improvement nationwide.

Sources and Resources:

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