
These forms are available to rheumatologists in other provinces if they are using one of the Ontario specialty-specific EMR platforms (Accuro, Telus-PS or Oscar).

Many physicians report that EMRs have increased their workload, that they are doing more data entry, and that they feel more physician burnout due to increasing requirements for documentation. Some even say that the EMR has altered the physician-patient encounter by reducing eye contact and not sensing the patient's body language. However, these challenges may be overcome by optimizing the office digital space and making the EMR part of routine practice in a way that enhances the patient-physician relationship. Rheumatologists have integrated kiosks to capture patient-reported outcomes in waiting rooms, and others have developed new EMR tools to facilitate documentation of patient care treatment plans that can be shared jointly with their patients. The ORA recently developed a customized Inflammatory Arthritis Care Plan to support patient self-management. The tool is being integrated into the Accuro EMR platform and will be piloted in a few Ontario rheumatology sites.

With the increased availability and adoption of EMR platforms, data is more readily available to users than ever before. Patients are accessing their personal healthcare in-

formation more easily—they can look up their blood work results online, engage in virtual visits through rheumatology telehealth, and in some areas, book their own appointments. Physicians can record and organize key clinical information, they can retrieve and edit it more easily, and with the emergence of individual dashboards, display and interpret data during patient encounters to help them make informed decisions that deliver improved patient care. To support this, the Arthritis Alliance of Canada² has developed a standardized rheumatology core dataset to be used in the EMR. With standardized data collection, measurement of comparative outcomes across users can be easily performed and collectively shared.

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4) Shared Care

Ontario MedsCheck Program Integrates Pharmacists into Patient Care

By Carolyn Whiskin, RPh, BScPharm, NCMP

The Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-term Care funds a medication review for any Ontario resident who is taking three or more chronic disease medications. Known as the “MedsCheck Program,” this consists of a one-on-one interview between the pharmacist and patient to review all prescription and non-prescription medications. A lifestyle assessment is also conducted to address smoking, alcohol, illicit drug use and exercise routine. At the end of the appointment, a complete list of all medications is provided to the patient and shared with their family physician, and any drug-therapy problems that are uncovered are shared with the prescribing physician.

Recognizing the opportunity of MedsCheck for arthritis patients, a joint committee of the Ontario Pharmacists Association and the Ontario Rheumatology Association was established. The goal was to identify how the MedsCheck

program could help provide an accurate medication profile for patients to share with their rheumatologist. One of the committee recommendations was to have the intake person at the rheumatologist's office request that patients book a MedsCheck appointment with their community pharmacist prior to their clinic appointment. The resulting medication list could then be faxed to the rheumatologist's office directly by the community pharmacy, and copies provided to the patient for distribution to any of their other health care providers.

A communication was subsequently distributed to every Ontario pharmacist and rheumatologist through their respective associations in an effort to maximize uptake of the MedsCheck program in rheumatology.

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