

Project Athena Update: AI Scribes



The Canadian Rheumatology Association's (CRA) Project Athena team has been working hard to address the inefficiencies of electronic medical records (EMR) and improve the burden on our members.

The CRA is pleased to announce that rheumatology-optimized AI scribes will soon be offered to members at a discounted rate! AI scribes are a new technology that helps physicians document their encounters without having to type, as the AI scribe transcribes and structures the encounter note.

The CRA, with the guidance of the Informatics Task Force, has vetted and negotiated with two AI scribe vendors for a significant discount, Heidi Health and Scribeberry. Both vendors' technologies are compliant with federal and provincial privacy legislation.

In addition to a discount, these scribes have begun and will continue to optimize their offerings with a rheumatology focus, including templates for rheumatology encounters and disease activity scores. We are also looking into adding a homunculus.

Over the past year, the Informatics Task Force has researched and tested many AI scribes to narrow the options down to the top two.

"Using AI scribes has transformed my practice," says Dr. Vandana Ahluwalia, Informatics Task Force co-chair. "I'm able to focus on the patient's clinical status as opposed to focusing on the computer. The burden of documentation has been eased, as the note is done at the end of each visit, letting me finish the day with a smile!"

Informatics Task Force co-chair Dr. Tommy Gerschman says AI scribes may take some patience and time to get used to, but he highly recommends giving them a try.

"Getting this to work for you takes some configuration, but with rheumatology-focused templates we have tried to make this process as simple as possible," says Dr. Gerschman. "Utilizing an AI scribe has made a positive difference in my administrative work, and I think everyone can benefit from the reduced cognitive burden associated with clinical documentation that AI scribes help provide. The technology will only become better."

Stay tuned for communications from the CRA regarding the two AI scribe offerings. Each scribe comes with a one-month free trial period so members can trial which platform they prefer.

In more Project Athena news, the Digital Quality Improvement Subcommittee has created a "CRA Guide for Developing and Endorsing Quality Measures". This guide has been approved by the CRA Board of Directors and will be available to members.

If you have any questions regarding Project Athena and the ongoing work on EMRs, please contact the CRA at info@rheum.ca.