

Medscheme announces roll-out of an Electronic Medical Records platform

- Less administration for GPs, more time to treat patients

Although the benefits offered by Electronic Medical Records (EMRs) to both healthcare professionals as well as healthcare administrators have long been recognised, uptake has been slow both locally and internationally. This now looks set to change as Medscheme, a subsidiary of the AfroCentric Health Group and South Africa's largest health risk management services provider, has announced its intention to roll out an EMR platform that will be available to all administrators.

An EMR is a digital version of the traditional paper based medical record for a patient and acts as a one-stop information portal accessible to multiple administrators, where relevant clinical information can be shared with healthcare professionals. The ultimate goal of an EMR is to optimise the quality of care of patients by providing the healthcare professional with more complete patient information, improving their ability to make well-informed decisions.

Medscheme CEO, Kevin Aron explains, "Healthcare providers have been frustrated by lengthy processes to capture information and having to use multiple platforms from different administrators, each with its own access specifications."

"In contrast, Medscheme's EMR has been designed to streamline and improve workflow for Family Practitioners, not hamper it. More efficient workflow processes and integrated clinical information cuts down on administration time and enables healthcare providers to make better informed decisions due to accurate and up-to-date information at their disposal."

The average patient struggles with medical terminology and medical professionals often have to rely on information provided by a patient who may not be able to accurately recall dates, medication or procedures when sharing their medical history. The EMR can therefore assist providers to more effectively diagnose patients, reduce medical errors and provide safer care.

Medscheme's EMR is a customised version of the HEALTHone Connect platform, which is available to multiple administrators. The EMR interfaces with Medscheme directly or through practice management software and is pre-populated with patient demographics, medical history, pathology results, approved chronic medications, care plans and risk stratification. Compliant with the standards of inter-operability set by the Department of Health in April 2014, Medscheme's EMR will also enable GPs to monitor clinical pathway adherence, motivate for modification of treatment plans and use e-scripting.

Patient confidentiality is of the utmost importance to Medscheme and the EMR platform has been developed in such a way that it does not allow administrator access to the healthcare provider's medical notes. The focus of the EMR is on monitoring health outcomes of patients, which in turn measures the effectiveness of managed care interventions whilst improving the quality of care that is provided.

Medscheme's EMR is currently available to 75 healthcare professionals and service providers through a pilot project that was launched in April this year. An extensive rollout of the EMR is planned once the pilot phase concludes in September.

Aron concludes, "The feedback during the pilot phase has been overwhelmingly positive, and we're looking forward to seeing how this technology becomes a game-changer for the

healthcare sector. It can only further improve the quality of patient care.”