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Ontario eServices Program Advances eReferral Interoperability

Novari and the Ocean eReferral Network integrate to improve the eReferral experience for patients and clinicians

Kingston, ON – In coordination with the Ontario eServices Program, CognisantMD (as part of the Think Research Consortium) and Novari Health have completed the first phase of integration between their solutions, leveraging the Ontario eReferral HL7 FHIR specification in alignment with the provincial digital health plan. HL7 FHIR is a recent worldwide standard technology framework, which includes safety checklists that guide implementers in ensuring data is securely transferred, making it easier to safely share and protect personal health information (PHI).

Novari Health and CognisantMD (Ocean) are known for their eReferral and access to care technology solutions (Novari eRequest, Novari ATC and Ocean eReferral). As part of the Ontario eServices Program, CognisantMD and Novari Health contribute to the development of an end-to-end eReferral solution that facilitates smoother transitions in care among healthcare providers and enhances the patient experience.

Additional integration work continues as vendors collaborate to build a seamless referral management ecosystem for Ontario. This transformational work and cooperation are driven by a shared vision for an electronic and efficient means to support clinicians from initial referral to specialist consult and, for some patients, surgical wait listing.

The first phase of the integration enables clinicians to send eReferrals directly from their electronic medical record (EMR) systems via Ocean to central intake programs and hospitals who use Novari eRequest for intake and processing.

Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre (TBRHSC) and St. Joseph's Care Group (SJCG) are the first to go-live with phase 1 of this integration for both Wound Care and Musculoskeletal (MSK) pathways including Hip, Knee, Shoulder, and Spine, with other pathways coming soon. The following functionality is included in phase 1 of the integration:

- Mandatory fields of referral data and attachments flow from primary care providers using Ocean to Novari eRequest receivers
- Appointment information is passed back to Ocean from Novari eRequest

Over the course of the next several months, the integration will include bi-directional messaging functionality, and allow attachments from Novari eRequest to flow back to Ocean.

"Northwestern Ontario is pleased to deploy Ocean and Novari's innovative integration as part of our digital health transformation to modernize and streamline access to care across our region," said Kelli O'Brien, President and CEO, St. Joseph's Care Group.

"This vendor collaboration is a prime example of how we can work together to improve the healthcare experience for patients in the North as well as throughout Ontario," said Dr. Rhonda Crocker Ellacott, President and CEO, Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre (TBRHSC) and Thunder Bay Regional Health Research Institute (TBRHRI).

Why Join the Ontario eServices Program (eReferral)

The transition to eReferral offers a number of benefits for both clinicians and patients, all of which contribute to the improved provider and patient experience within the healthcare system. Benefits include the following:

- Patients are better informed regarding the status of their appointments and have the ability to confirm these appointments electronically.
- Pre-populated forms for the patient chart on the referring end, ensuring up-to-date patient information is received, such as medication lists and allergies.
- **Access to wait time information through the searchable, map-based directory.**
- Receiving complete referrals, eliminating the need to request additional information from the referrer **and speeding up wait times.**
- Reduction in reminder phone calls to patients **with automated patient alerts.**
- Elimination of faxes or phone calls to referring providers informing them of the appointment status.

The Ontario eServices Program, which is co-led by the eHealth Centre of Excellence (eCE) and the eConsult Centre of Excellence (eCOE), is proud to be vendor agnostic with a focus on improving the healthcare experience. The eCE holds provincial procurements with both the Think Research Consortium (Think Research, CognisantMD (Ocean), and Centre for Effective Practice), and Novari Health.

With the support of this Ministry-funded program, Novari Health (Novari eRequest and Novari ATC) and CognisantMD (Ocean eReferral) intend to continue building integrations to enhance the eReferral experience.

For more information on eReferral, contact the Ontario eServices Program at eReferral@ehealthce.ca.

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About Novari Health

Novari Health designs, builds, and implements award-winning enterprise scale SaaS solutions that improve access to care, coordination of care, and the delivery of healthcare services. Based in Kingston Ontario and with offices in Vancouver, Australia, and New Zealand, Novari has

become one of the largest Canadian based digital health solution providers. ISO 27001 certified, Novari Health is a Microsoft Gold Partner, with software solutions hosted on Microsoft Azure Canadian and Australian cloud data centres. For more information, visit novarihealth.com.



About CognisantMD

CognisantMD, a WELL Health Company (TSX:WELL), is Canada's leading provider of EMR-integrated patient engagement and eReferral solutions, built on the secure, cloud-based Ocean Platform. Ocean integrates with the nation's leading electronic medical records systems, provincial resources, and other digital health solutions to allow patients, healthcare providers, and systems to securely share and exchange patient health information. By replacing outdated, fax-based technology with EMR-integrated eReferrals, the Ocean eReferral Network is helping to reduce wait times and improve access to care. Ocean's full suite of integrated patient engagement tools is also helping improve digital access for patients, increase access to primary care, and support virtual care across Canada. To learn more, visit www.cognisantmd.com.



About the Ontario eServices Program

The Ontario eServices Program delivers digital services (eConsult and eReferral are the first initiatives in the scope of the program) that support clinical workflows and facilitate smoother transitions in care and an improved patient experience. The Ontario eServices Program is co-led by the Ontario eConsult Centre of Excellence (eConsult COE) and the eHealth Centre of Excellence (eCE) and is funded by the Ontario Ministry of Health (MOH). For more information, visit www.eServicesProgramOntario.ca.