

Alberta Health Services Adopts Lexicomp's Drug Information Solutions

Canada's largest healthcare system selects Lexicomp's point-of-care drug information to help enhance patient safety, increase system-wide efficiency

For the 117,000 healthcare professionals, support staff and volunteers of Alberta Health Services (AHS) – Canada's first province-wide, fully integrated health system – improving patient safety isn't just a responsibility.

It's a strategic priority, and area of commitment integrated into the system's culture.

It's only natural, then, that in August 2010, AHS contracted Lexicomp to provide site-wide, point-of-care drug information solutions to clinicians across all Alberta healthcare facilities, including 97 acute care sites.

According to Erwin Friesen, AHS drug information manager, Lexicomp was a natural choice because of its ability to help AHS clinicians enhance patient safety.

"The big thing that sets Lexicomp apart from the competition is the ability to access the drug information on Smartphones/PDAs. Now all student interns, physicians, pharmacists and nurses can find answers to clinical questions anywhere, anytime, right on their mobile devices."

– Verla Chatsis
AHS Drug Information Pharmacist
University of Alberta Hospital, Edmonton

"One of the first steps in patient safety is related to choosing the right drug for the right indication," said Friesen. "Using bad or outdated information could compromise patient safety and cause a clinician to make a wrong decision. Lexicomp helps our clinicians enhance patient safety by providing them the most current drug information without forcing them to do extensive primary literature research."

Friesen, who administers drug information, and drug utilization and policy for the provincial pharmacy, says his extensive experience as a pharmacist, including 26 years in drug information management, helped him objectively evaluate Lexicomp's drug information resources.

"I've worked in academic and non-academic settings and know how the system works," said Friesen. "When you work in intensive care as I did you want to access information rapidly because you don't have time to look for information for academic satisfaction. Lexicomp helps clinicians find answers faster at the point-of-care."

AHS Clinicians Get Mobile Access to Lexicomp with Smartphone/PDA Site-wide License

AHS clinicians began evaluating Lexicomp in 2009 in an effort to select an additional drug information provider that offered the system's healthcare professionals a more point-of-care solution than the resources they were using. Lexicomp provides an alternative for clinicians who want quicker, more seamless access to comprehensive drug and clinical information.

The contract gives AHS clinicians institution-wide access to the Lexicomp Knowledge Solution, a suite of comprehensive drug information databases and clinical modules accessible online and on the latest Smartphone/PDA devices. (See box on reverse side)

Verla Chatsis, AHS drug information pharmacist at the University of Alberta Hospital in Edmonton, was immediately drawn to Lexicomp Online™ – Lexicomp's Internet-based drug information resource – because of its ease of use. "Lexicomp is so easy-to-use because of the way the information is organized," said Chatsis. "The interface is more intuitive than our current drug information resource, so it helps us find information faster."

Chatsis, a long-time user of Lexicomp's extensive drug information handbooks, marveled at the notion of all AHS clinicians having access to Lexicomp on their mobile devices. "The big thing that sets Lexicomp apart from the competition is the ability to access the drug information on Smartphones/PDAs," said Chatsis. "Now all student interns, physicians, pharmacists and nurses can find answers to clinical questions anywhere, anytime, right on their mobile devices."

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Another deciding factor for AHS was Lexicomp's rating as "most preferred" drug information database by a recent study in the *Canadian Journal of Hospital Pharmacy*.¹

"One of the things we did was look at how Lexicomp compared to other drug information resources," said Chatsis. "We were aware of [the CJHP study] and others out there that specifically rate the general usability of Lexicomp as superior to [other resources]."

The CJHP study determined Lexicomp had a better layout and navigation than that of the competition – allowing users to find the answers they need quicker and more efficiently.

Lexicomp's Patient Education Handouts Help Improve Patient Health

AHS healthcare providers have come to rely on Lexicomp's patient education materials, which are printed in 18 languages (with Punjabi coming in late 2010), to deliver quality service and ensure safer outcomes for such a large patient base.

"I advocated for Lexicomp for a number of reasons, but mostly because of the patient education handouts in different languages," said Gayle Pearson, AHS drug information pharmacist. "The information provided is straight forward, simple and easy-to-read."

Ideal for patient counseling, Lexicomp's patient education handouts cover thousands of medications, diseases and procedures. Presented in an easy-to-read format, the materials help patients better understand complex details about their condition, disease or medications – ultimately leading to improved patient outcomes.

"The level of language used [in the materials] is not beyond what everyone can comprehend," said Pearson. "The double spacing format is recognized by our educational department as the specific format needed in order for a reader to be able to retain the information. Plus the additional instructions make the leaflets adaptable to each patient."

AHS Clinicians Make Seamless Transition to Lexicomp

Although Lexicomp has provided drug information solutions to select AHS facilities since 2007, including: Calgary Health Region; Alberta Cancer Board; Aspen Regional Health Authority; Eastern Health Authority; and David Thompson Health Region, the majority of AHS clinicians have just started to use Lexicomp's products for the first time.

Despite having very little previous experience with Lexicomp, AHS clinicians don't anticipate any hiccups when training new users.

"Since Lexicomp's products are so intuitive to use and straight forward, I don't think training will be a problem," said Chatsis.

According to Friesen, AHS will need to focus mostly on new employees and students when conducting training, and depend on them to teach others how to use Lexicomp products. "We will try to get people up to speed as fast as possible," said Friesen. "We need to gear training towards younger users because they are more used to technology and they will teach the older clinicians how to use the product."

Lexicomp is currently conducting extensive on-site trainings at AHS facilities and hosting webinars as part of a process to ensure all AHS clinicians quickly transition to using a new drug information resource. Lexicomp hopes to complete training by late 2010.



The Lexicomp Knowledge Solution™ provides all AHS clinicians site-wide access to the industry's most trusted drug information. AHS healthcare personnel can find answers to clinical questions 24/7, and access Lexicomp's comprehensive content online and on their mobile devices. Lexicomp resources available to AHS clinicians include:

- **Lexicomp Online**, a Web-based drug and disease information resource for pharmacists, physicians and nurses offering two levels of drug information, both concise and in-depth
- **Lexicomp for Smartphone/PDA devices**
- **Martindale: The Complete Drug Reference™**, an international drug reference containing information from over 40 countries and regions

About Alberta Health Services

On May 15, 2008, 12 formerly separate health entities in Alberta joined forces to become Alberta Health Services (AHS), Canada's largest health system. Alberta Health Services is the provincial health authority responsible for planning and delivering health supports and services for more than 3.7 million adults and children living in Alberta. Its mission is to provide a patient-focused, quality health system that is accessible and sustainable for all Albertans.

About Lexicomp

Lexicomp, Inc. is a leading provider of drug data and drug reference solutions for the healthcare industry. Pharmacists, physicians, nurses and dentists worldwide depend on Lexicomp's comprehensive, point-of-care information to enhance medication safety, improve patient outcomes and increase efficiency. Lexicomp's trusted drug information is accessible online, on the latest Smartphone/PDA devices and through integration with health information systems.

¹ CJHP – Vol. 63 (2) March – April 2010