

News - Uutiset

Transfer of patient data to national archive underway in Finland

The implementation of the Finnish National Archive of Health Information is proceeding on schedule. Work to transfer patient health records into the Patient Data Repository began at the East Savo Hospital District at the beginning of November. Making patient information available in an electronic archive is designed to promote controlled information disclosure as well as secure information sharing. Subject to patient consent, under the new system, health records can be accessed by public and private healthcare providers, wherever patients are receiving treatment. Members of the public can view their own medical information, entered at a healthcare unit, online.

The Patient Data Repository forms part of the National Archive of Health Information, a national healthcare information system also known as Kanta. Electronic prescriptions were the first service to be rolled out as part of the archive and have been widely adopted across Finland. Work is also underway for a national roll-out of similar services for the social services sector.

Implementation and content set for gradual expansion

Healthcare providers are set for a phased adoption of the National Archive of Health Information. Public sector units will join the archive in the course of 2014, followed by private sector service providers by 2015 at the latest. Healthcare providers are preparing for the change by enhancing their data security and data communications arrangements, providing training to staff and developing electronic identification systems.

The archive content is also set to expand gradually. Initially, the National Archive of Health Information will only be used to store key patient data, including diagnoses and information on medical alerts, inoculations and prescribed medications. At a later date, health and care plans as well as summaries of key medical information will be introduced. By 2016, further data, including dental health documents will be added. The inclusion of this data requires medical records to be placed in the archive in a structured electronic format.

Patients will benefit from the new system in a number of ways. All patients will have access to their own medical information. In addition, it will make it easier for patients to switch their healthcare providers if they wish to do so, as their medical information will be accessible to all healthcare units. The new system will also help to avoid the unnecessary repetition of medical investigations as results from previous investigations will be accessible to medical staff.

Electronic prescriptions gaining ground

Electronic prescriptions are already widely used by Finland's public healthcare providers and the majority of prescriptions are issued electronically. In the private sector, the number of service providers issuing e-prescriptions is growing steadily. Under Finnish legislation, all private sector health service providers are required to adopt electronic prescriptions by 1 April 2014 at the latest. Joining the national Prescription Centre requires healthcare providers to have an audited patient

information system in place. Currently, a total of nine patient information systems and three pharmacy systems compatible with electronic prescriptions have been deployed in Finland.

**Enterprise architecture
– managing the big picture**

A so-called enterprise architecture description has been drawn up for the purpose of facilitating the

development of Finland's social welfare and healthcare information systems. Finnish municipalities, national authorities and service providers must work together to manage the systems nationally. Work is currently underway to prepare the strategic aims and a roadmap for the enterprise architecture up to the year 2016. This work is expected to conclude at the end of 2013.
