

## Engages Outpatients With MEDITECH's Customizable Questionnaires



Meaningful client engagement has been a fundamental practice at Ontario Shores Centre for Mental Health Sciences since the organization implemented MEDITECH's Patient and Consumer Health Portal in 2014. As a leader in mental healthcare delivery, Ontario Shores is always looking for ways to engage clients in their own care. When the organization implemented MEDITECH's Expanse Ambulatory solution in 2022, the steering committee saw an opportunity to improve engagement – by replacing paper forms in outpatient settings with online questionnaires embedded in the portal.

### Bringing questionnaires online

No stranger to innovation, Ontario Shores became one of the first healthcare systems in Canada to adopt Expanse Ambulatory. This decision enabled the organization to bring questionnaires online, furthering its commitment to a paperless environment and extending its client engagement efforts.

Before beginning the initiative, Ontario Shores needed to ensure that questionnaires:

- Reinforced the healthcare system's recovery model of care standards for mental health, which includes the individual's hopes, wishes, and recovery goals.
- Were easily accessible and functional to patients and clinicians.
- Could be embedded in clinicians' workflow.

In addition, the healthcare system needed a method to quickly enroll patients in the portal and enable them to fill out these questionnaires.

## AT A GLANCE

Ontario Shores Centre for Mental Health Sciences (Whitby, Ontario) is a 346-bed public teaching hospital providing mental health assessments and treatment services that include interprofessional, recovery-oriented programs for individuals combating serious mental illness.



### Ahead of the curve

- World's first behavioral health organization to achieve HIMSS EMRAM Stage 7
- Second hospital in Canada to achieve HIMSS AMAM Stage 6
- First HIMSS Davies Enterprise Award recipient in Canada

## Developing a strategy

Ontario Shores' goal for bringing questionnaires online was to streamline and refine care delivery to its clients, who are managing mental health conditions, and reinforce its recovery model of care standards. To guarantee the initiative's success, the implementation team developed a strategy that included build workshops, rigorous testing, and enhanced portal enrollment workflows. They also included client input when formulating the questionnaires and designing the process. As a result, the team built more than 30 standardized scales and questionnaires for a number of different diagnoses:

- Patient Story
- Recovery Assessment Scale
- Life Events Checklist
- Patient Health Questionnaire - 9
- Generalized Anxiety Disorder - 7
- Various alcohol and drug use screening tools

Build workshops helped the team to verify that the clinicians could incorporate the new process into their clinical day-to-day workflow. Workshops consisted of a group of Ontario Shores staff walking through the process, offering feedback to optimize questionnaires for clinical workflows and daily administrative routines.

"These sessions brought the project team and clinicians together so we could determine what information got exchanged and learn more about their processes," said Bethany Holeschek, professional practice team member at Ontario Shores. "By collaborating, we got to hear directly from the clinicians and administrative staff, to find out what they wanted most from online questionnaires."

To confirm the questionnaires included all the information clinicians needed to help meet their patients' recovery model goals, Ontario Shores' team organized a "day in the life" of a client. The event also ensured that the questionnaires matched clinicians' workflow. This testing and behind-the-scenes work was vital to the initiative.

## Enrolling clients on the spot

Ontario Shores' approach to questionnaires encourages clients to become active participants in their own healthcare by fostering information transparency. To expand portal enrollment, the organization implemented MEDITECH's Quick Enroll option. Administrative staff can either email credentials to a client or define a username and password during the client's visit for enrollment on the spot.

Now that questionnaires are embedded into Ontario Shores' workflow, clients receive an email containing a link when they register for their visit. They can then access the portal to fill out the appropriate questionnaires.

## Reaping the benefits

Ontario Shores is committed to advancing client-driven care through online questionnaires, furthering its standing as a patient engagement pioneer. Today, 99% of the questionnaires are available online across eight clinics, for both in-person and virtual visits. Because they capture an exceptional amount of patient information up front, questionnaires help providers to better assess patient needs and determine the most appropriate treatment. In addition, online questionnaires have improved efficiency, saved time, and eliminated paper.

Since the introduction of questionnaires, portal usage has increased significantly, which has had a positive impact on care delivery. And enrollment continues to rise.

**"Our portal usage here at Ontario Shores feels really advanced," said Holeschek. "It's great to see how much we've optimized the portal, and we'll continue to use it as a tool to help drive recovery and wellness by making information transparent to clients."**

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