

CARECONNECT HIE

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Officially launched in April 2022, the CareConnect HIE is South Africa's first industry-wide Health Information Exchange (HIE). Founded by three of the country's leading hospital groups and three of the largest medical scheme administrators, CareConnect HIE connects providers, patients and funders through a unified care record that delivers up-to-date, real-time, and consolidated information across the entire healthcare ecosystem.

Sparked by the need for patient-centric innovation that drives efficiencies, the CareConnect HIE is a single integration hub that links information from all sources – healthcare facilities, funders and providers – to deliver relevant and meaningful patient information to authorised users, when and where it is needed.

In everyday clinical situations, the CareConnect HIE will provide a holistic set of patient information, thereby saving precious time for clinicians, reducing medical errors, and helping to decrease the cost of healthcare by avoiding duplicate and unnecessary tests.

To date, nearly four million patient records have been added to the HIE and the number of transactions has exceeded 50 million, with a transaction speed of under one second per transaction. Usage of the HIE and its unified data records is also growing, as organisations implement use cases that are beneficial for their businesses, patients and clinicians.

Security and confidentiality of information are cornerstones of the CareConnect HIE which conforms to both local and international data privacy regulations, such as ISO 27001/27701 and POPIA. In addition to these strict data privacy and governance standards, all participants in the HIE have signed data privacy agreements which governs the purposes for which information can be used. Information in the HIE always remains protected and may only be accessed by authorized users. Sensitive information, such as health information, may only be accessed by medical practitioners when medically necessary and only with a patient's consent.

A comprehensive set of information is critical to the success of the HIE. The more data that's added to the HIE, the more value it is able to provide and the greater the strategic asset it becomes for the health system as a whole. In view of this, Phase Two of development, currently underway, will see the inclusion of diagnostic information, such as Radiology and Pathology data. This phase is a critical step in further paving the way for progressive change to the status quo in areas such as quality indicators and measurement; standardisation of codes; reimbursement models; and coordination of care.

Although the CareConnect HIE is a private health sector initiative, it has been developed to be able to strategically respond to the need for HIE services in the public sector, given government's progressive stance on the importance of digitisation in improving access to quality healthcare.

Worldwide, front and centre of many health policy agendas is the ability to balance the delivery of quality outcomes with ever spiralling costs. It is for this reason that some of the most advanced health systems globally, including China, India, England, Scotland, Switzerland and the USA, are supporting HIEs to assist in driving health system efficiencies.

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