

NEWS RELEASE

NHS trust saves its nurses nearly 20,000 hours a year through ePMA

Nurses at North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust save thousands of hours on drug rounds, and benefit from safer ways of working, following the go-live of the TrakCare electronic prescribing and medicines administration system

Eton, 13th February 2020. Nurses at North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust have saved more than 50 hours a day, and are experiencing safer ways of working, since becoming the first in the UK to use the InterSystems TrakCare electronic prescribing and medicines administration (ePMA) system.

The ePMA technology has replaced a previous paper-based approach to prescribing and administering medicines to patients – which has traditionally required nurses to spend time searching wards for patients’ medicine charts, deciphering and working from handwritten notes.

Since going live with ePMA in 2018, nurses have witnessed a substantial reduction in the average time taken to complete drug rounds – with medicines administration now completed for a patient in approximately one third of the time.

Under the previous paper-based system a nurse would take an average of nearly 10 minutes to administer drugs for each patient. Through ePMA, this now takes an average of a little over three minutes.

Clare Ranson, clinical matron at North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust, said: “It’s definitely reduced the amount of time nurses spend on medication rounds. The real-time record allows all those involved in care to see what’s happening – the nurses, doctors and pharmacists – not just the person holding the piece of paper. This is making rounds ‘leaner’ with less time spent chasing up paper records across wards, freeing up time for nurses to focus on what’s important – time with patients.”

Typically, four drug rounds are carried out for patients each day. With the busiest rounds being in the morning and at tea-time, the average time saved is as much as 45 minutes for an individual nurse carrying out a single drug round.

Across the hospital, nurses are now saving on average a total of 53 hours per day on drug rounds, or 19,345 hours a year.

Significant gains have also been seen in areas like handover, and reduced risk of prescription and medicine administration errors.

Mandy Skilcorn, a ward matron at North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust, said: “Nurses have taken to ePMA very, very quickly, and it is very safe for patients. Before ePMA we had a completely paper-based medicine chart process that led to handwriting challenges, and actually being able to get hold of the chart to view and record administration information was difficult. Now, through ePMA, nurses can quickly see if anything has been missed, you can read the prescription, and you can see when drugs, like paracetamol for example, are needed, and when they were last given. Using ePMA feels a lot safer.”

Natalie Dixon, patient process facilitator, added: “Having medication information available electronically in TrakCare makes life easier. ePMA is a lot easier than looking for kardexes, which just

takes up a lot more time than if it is on the computer. Now the information is there, you know what you are doing, and you just know what you need to give to patients and when.”

The deployment of ePMA is key part of a wider deployment of the TrakCare electronic patient record which will enable the trust to reach some of the most advanced levels of digital maturity seen in hospitals anywhere in the world. The new system has been instilling confidence in both healthcare professionals and patients.

Dr Jay Vasani, consultant physician and chief clinical information officer at North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust, said: “Patients want the person who is looking after them – the doctors, nurses and pharmacists – to have the information they need when they need it. The main benefits of ePMA are that medications are visible whenever and wherever we need them. You can access vital prescribing information in seconds, which is essential in a crisis.”

Professor Graham Evans, the trust’s chief information and technology officer, added: “ePMA is one of the biggest transformational changes we will implement as part of our EPR programme.”

Charles King, account manager for North Tees and Hartlepool at InterSystems, said: “North Tees and Hartlepool is a digital pioneer in the NHS. It is fantastic to see the trust’s willingness to be the first to implement a system turn into tangible results for hard working frontline staff. The trust should be proud of their achievements and we look forward to working with their dedicated digital team to deliver more and more benefits to patients and the professionals who look after them.”

About North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust

North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust is an integrated hospital and community services healthcare organisation serving around 400,000 people in Hartlepool, Stockton and parts of County Durham. We also provide bowel and breast screening services as well as community dental services and other community-based services to a wider population in Teesside and Durham. Our turnover is around £275m and we have 5,500 medical, nursing, clinical and non-clinical support staff.

About InterSystems

InterSystems is the information engine that powers some of the world’s most important applications. In healthcare, finance, government, and other sectors where lives and livelihoods are at stake, InterSystems has been a strategic technology partner since 1978. InterSystems is a privately held company headquartered in Cambridge, Massachusetts (USA), with offices worldwide, and its software products are used daily by millions of people in more than 80 countries. For more information, visit [InterSystems.co.uk](https://www.intersystems.co.uk)