

Publications

Health Care Alert: Patients and Providers Potentially Benefit from Clinical Affiliations

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CVS recently announced that it has entered into clinical affiliations with four additional health care providers to “help enhance access to high-quality, affordable health care services for patients.”^[1] CVS is partnering with John Muir Health in California; University of Chicago Medical Center in Illinois; Novant Health, serving the Winston-Salem area in North Carolina; and University of Michigan Health System in Michigan, bringing its network of affiliates to nearly 70 major health systems and health care providers nationwide.

These affiliations, according to CVS, will enable it to provide prescription and MinuteClinic visit information to participating health care providers by enabling communication between secured electronic health record (EHR) systems, with the stated goal of helping to enhance clinical care for patients. For example, CVS/pharmacy will share electronic messages and alerts with affiliates’ physicians regarding patient medication non-adherence. MinuteClinic will electronically share patient visit summaries with the patient’s primary care physician (with patient consent). These affiliations also encourage collaboration between the health care provider affiliates and MinuteClinic which may improve coordination of care for patients seen at MinuteClinic locations.

Nationwide, patients, pharmacies, and other health care providers all stand to benefit potentially from similar types of clinical affiliations. By facilitating the sharing of pertinent health information and hopefully increasing overall patient engagement, these types of affiliations have the power to materially improve coordination of care and medication adherence, and, ultimately, to positively impact clinical outcomes, including the potential for better management of at least some chronic health conditions, the leading cause of death and disability in the U.S.^[2]

Historically, pharmacies and non-physician clinics, as with most other sectors of the health care industry, have operated in an isolated manner within the greater health care delivery system. Clinical integration, which can take a variety of forms and vary in overall legal and business complexity, promotes a seamless connection between health care providers with the goal of more effectively and efficiently managing

patient care. As a result, health care providers are likely better positioned to achieve the desired clinical and financial benefits tied to population health management. While overall population health management likely also requires some kind of affiliation and/or data sharing between a patient's health care providers and third party payor, the clinical affiliation of unrelated health care providers is a measurable step in that direction.

If you have any questions regarding structuring clinical affiliations, health care information technology, or other issues related to sharing medical information please contact your Vorys health care attorney.

^[1] <https://www.cvshealth.com/content/cvs-health-announces-new-clinical-affiliations-leading-health-care-providers-ca-il-nc-and-mi>.

^[2] <http://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/overview/>.