

BRIGHT LIGHTS AWARDS



2024

CITY OF LAKES FAMILY HEALTH TEAM

Award: Investing in digital health of primary care

Achievement: Leveraging Digital Health to Reduce Administrative Burden and Improve Patient Care



City of Lakes FHT leveraged AI to reduce primary care providers' administrative burden. The catalyst to this project was the knowledge family physicians average 19 hours a week on administration, according to the College of Family Physicians of Canada. The driving force was to reduce that burden on physicians, nurse practitioners and other interprofessional healthcare providers and make better use of that time.

City of Lakes FHT tested various AI scribe companies. The team decided on a three-month pilot using AI scribe technology to ease notetaking. This improved patient experience by freeing providers' time for quality interactions. It also enhanced provider experience by alleviating the pressure to chart in real-time and reduced burnout by decreasing late-night notetaking, thus improving work-life balance.

The team worked closely with the AI Scribe company to adapt the tool with primary care providers' experience and workflow in mind. That included providing feedback and advice on the best ways to chart encounters and capture data in a standardized manner.

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Cognizant of the need to protect patients' privacy, they worked with a privacy lawyer on assessments and patient consent packages. Additionally, the team provided feedback on equity concerns such as accessibility for French-speaking patients.

Following the successful pilot, CoLFHT collaborated with the regional Ontario Health Team and created an opportunity for primary care providers across the region to try the AI scribe. Leveraging the FHT's leadership and experience, the OHT initiated a one-year AI scribe pilot for more than 11 primary care organizations and over 70 healthcare providers.

The final word goes to Dr. Natalie Goodale, a family physician at City of Lakes FHT: "Previously, I'd type as the patient spoke. And I didn't realize how much brain power it took to listen to a patient, convert that in my head, take notes, continue asking questions and formulate what my plan is at the same time."

Key Facts:

- The average physician spends 19 hours a week on administrative tasks;
- City of Lakes worked with an AI scribe company to adapt the transcribing tool to primary care providers needs;
- AI scribing relieved pressures of charting in real-time;
- The impact of the three-month pilot led to collaborating with the local OHT for a broader pilot project;
- More than 11 primary care organizations and more than 70 healthcare providers took part in the OHT's year-long pilot project