**Press Release**
**Data sharing critical in helping GuideLink provide individuals with the right care at the right time**
*Public safety agencies, healthcare providers, and social service organizations have launched secure data-sharing capabilities to provide clients of the newly opened GuideLink center access to the care they need when they need it.*

Iowa City, IA – May 1, 2020.

*[Summary]* ASSOCIATED PRESS | HEALTH – Public safety agencies, healthcare providers, and social service organizations, in collaboration with Cal Poly's Digital Transformation Hub (powered by Amazon Web Services), have created InterConnect, a system and process that provides participating organizations, such as healthcare and crisis service providers, with the ability to securely share patient information to improve service delivery, while maintaining all compliance requirements.  What was once a fragmented and inefficient crisis care experience, is now connected and seamless, providing clients/patients efficient and coordinated care whenever and wherever they need it.

*[Opportunity/problem]* First responders, healthcare, and social service providers can provide better client/patient services if they have the relevant information about the individuals they are serving. The use of electronic health records to record patients' previous interactions has become common place. This allows providers to bill for services, understand how and when services are used, and more importantly, provide the correct care to clients in the future. Clients routinely interact with more than one care provider, but all-to-often the data is not shared between providers. The result is clients having to repeatedly answer the same questions, provide the same information/documentation, and verbally explain the care they have received elsewhere. This can be frustrating to the client, result in incomplete and incorrect information being provided to the provider, and result in fragmented and inefficient care. When addressing mental health crises, the data sharing problem can make it much harder for clients to receive the appropriate and connected care they need. This makes it more difficult to stabilize clients' health status and break longer term cycles on service dependency.

*[Approach/Solution]* Public safety agencies, healthcare providers, and social service organizations routinely interact with the same individuals. Most of these organizations use third-party platforms to enter, search, and store their data. Some are maintained on-site and some on cloud services. However, very few of them, if any, have the capability to share data with other platforms. Because these are third-party products, the customer organizations usually do not have the rights, access, or expertise to add sharing functionality. The solution is to use InterConnect, a platform which imports data from the various organizational and 3rd party databases and integrates them into a single dataset that can be appropriately leveraged by the larger service provider community. InterConnect allows each original service provider organization to maintain control over each piece of data and explicitly authorize any sharing of that data to maintain compliance with applicable laws. By using InterConnect, each agency has authorized access to the data they need, when they need it, to provide the best care for the client.

*[Leader Quote]* *"InterConnect is a game changer for Iowa City healthcare service provision. Especially to our clients that utilize services repeatedly and routinely and have routine interactions with law enforcement."* said City Council Member Jane Doe. *'We've been hearing that data sharing is key to our ability to combat this once in a generation mental health crises in our community. All of the different service providers now have a way to share insights about patients with their fellow organizations on their own terms and in a way that is ethical, legal, and results in the best care possible for the clients. InterConnect is what's best for both the clients and the folks that service their needs."*

**[Customer experience]** Clients visit their care providers as usual. During routine or emergency care, the provider will have access to the data maintained by the clients' other care providers. This eliminates the need for clients to recall and report previous care on each visit. It provides the care provider with a complete picture of the client's health, which allows for more informed and timely decision making. The coordinated care that is made possible drastically increases the efficiency of care of likelihood of long-term, positive outcomes for the client.

**[Customer testimonials]** *"I had an episode again the other day and ended up in the ER. That's the third time this year. Usually, I have to sit there and try to remember all the last visits I had and what they gave me. This time was different."* said Mike, who experiences frequent mental health crises. *"The ER folks already knew what I got the last time and even that I had recently went to the new county wide mental health facility. They've got me set up with a counselor at the County tomorrow and they said that she will have my records and not to worry about that part. This is a lot better than trying to do this myself every time which is what usually happens and then 3 months later I'm right back in here again."* said Mike.

The data sharing problem in healthcare has been around for a long time.

*"Sharing data about clients in the past has been difficult at best."* Said Sherry Kovina, a nurse for 20 years and now ER Administrator at a local hospital. *"As an ER nurse, I needed to know what my client had been through, why they were in my ER room, and what treatment or services they've had in the past. And then it always felt like I was just patching the client up and sending them off to the next service provider, so they could start blind all over again. Sharing client data in the past has been nearly impossible because no one wants to be responsible for HIPAA data compliance issues or getting wrapped up into a bad headline where sensitive client data ended up in the wrong hands. Now I can get access to the right information about the client and provide access to the data that I know the next service provider will need all through the master data dashboard down to the client level. InterConnect has been approved from the very top and audited by independent entities and our top management has made it clear that we owe it to our clients and other service provider colleagues to share the appropriate client data so they can get the best healthcare possible. I've seen the same culture and organizational change in my colleagues at the other agencies as well.*


To learn more about the InterConnect solution, go to www.dxhub.calpoly.edu/contact

Customer FAQ (Client/Patient)

Q: How is this beneficial to my care?

A: Data sharing allows your providers to focus on your immediate care and needs. This is accomplished by centrally coordinating your care, instead of having you spend time completing repeat forms. Regardless of the provider, they will be able to determine the right treatment at the right time by having instant access to your health history.


Q: Who will have access to my data?

A: Your data will only be viewed by experts providing direct care to you on a system that is compliant with the HIPAA Security Rule.

Stakeholder FAQ (Agency Management, Elected Officials, Community)

Q: How is this beneficial to my organization?

A: Your staff will be able to see a complete view of historical and current treatment by other providers, plus information on your client/patient's criminal justice involvement. This information can help them to understand what other organizations are providing or have provided services and whether or not those services resulted in a positive outcome.

Q: How can data sharing help to improve services and outcomes for my clients/patients?

A: Service providers can better understand the history and any changes in behavior and health. This will allow one provider to notify and coordinate with one or more other providers, as needed, in response to any client/patient behavior or health changes.

Q: Does this meet my compliance requirements?

A: The data sharing platform meets HIPAA and 42 CFR Part 2 security rules. It is up to the provider to authorize and share data in compliance relevant to their professional requirements.

Q: Does my organization maintain ownership of the data?

A: Yes. The data sharing platform acts as data custodian, which is responsible for the custody, transport, and storage of data. Data stored on the platform will only be used as directed by owner of the data.

Q: How is it going to make my employees' work more efficient?

A: It will reduce the time and frustration of asking repeat questions while providing a better starting point for treatment. Your employees will no longer spend time waiting for information from other providers to understand the client/patient's history.

Q: Does this app report information on queries, in detail or aggregate, to any entity outside our agency?

A: No. The data sharing platform does not provide any information on your data or your use of the system to any third party.

Q: Does this work with our existing application(s)?

A: Yes. Any application vendor that provides a method to allow access to your data by a third-party or an application that stores data in a common database format will work with this platform. However, some vendors may charge for or limit access.

Q: Is this app HIPAA compliant? How do I know?

A: The operator of the platform will sign a Business Associate Agreement (BAA) with a covered entity and the platform is configured to be compliant with HIPAA security Rule.

Q: Where do I get help?  What if I have questions?

A: The operator of the platform provides support via telephone, email, and remote desktop.

Q: Will it be updated and current?

A: In most instances, the data stored on the platform will be updated live.