

AI scribes show promising results in helping family doctors and nurse practitioners spend more time with patients and less time on paperwork

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TORONTO, Sept. 11, 2024 /CNW/ - Family doctors report spending 70% to 90% less time on paperwork in a study evaluating the use of artificial intelligence (AI) scribe technology. **OntarioMD (OMD)**, a subsidiary of the Ontario Medical Association (OMA), announced this week the findings of the study that examined the use of AI scribes by more than 150 family doctors and nurse practitioners (NPs) over a three-month period. AI scribes capture conversations between family doctors or nurse practitioners (NPs) and their patients and summarizes them into detailed electronic medical notes.

Ontario study finds AI scribes reduce paperwork for family doctors and nurse practitioners and increase patient time

The family doctors and NPs assessed AI scribes' effectiveness in reducing their time spent on administrative tasks and the results are very promising. They support the OMA's advocacy of solutions that reduce doctors' administrative workload. The results also support the Ministry of Health and Ontario Health's Patients Before Paperwork (Pb4P) initiative aimed at helping doctors spend more time caring for patients instead of doing unnecessary paperwork.

Highlights from the study include:

- 70% to 90% less time spent on paperwork, and 3 to 4 hours per week saved doing administrative tasks.
- 83% of participants said they would use an AI scribe in their practice long term.
- 82% of participants said they would recommend AI scribes to their colleagues.
- 79% of participants said they were able to spend more time on patient care.
- 76% of participants reported a reduction in information overload during patient consultations.

Part of the evaluation included the use of Robotic Process Automation (RPA), or bots, to automate actions documented by the AI scribe during patient visits, such as sending appointment reminders to patients. Benefits included faster follow up with patients to book appointments, a more streamlined booking process for patients, and improved continuity of care.

"Our government is embracing innovation to reduce the administrative burden on family doctors so they can spend more time caring for patients instead of doing duplicative or unnecessary paperwork. AI scribe is one of the many innovative initiatives our government is using to help put patients before paperwork that will together free up to 95,000 hours annually for physicians to put back into their practices caring for patients." – Sylvia Jones, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health.

"2.5 million Ontarians are now without a family doctor and forecasts show that will increase dramatically to one in four without one by 2026," says Kimberly Moran, CEO of the Ontario Medical Association. "Rolling out AI scribes to every doctor in the province will allow them to spend more time caring for patients, and is one way we can help prevent the family medicine crisis from becoming a catastrophe."

The OMD-led project was funded by the Ontario Ministry of Health through its agency, Ontario Health. The **eHealth Centre of Excellence (eCE)** and **Women's College Hospital Institute for Health System Solutions and Virtual Care (WIHV)** partnered with OMD to implement the project with more than 150 family doctors or nurse practitioners.

Read more about the **report's findings** to inform plans for widespread adoption of AI scribes and bots at [OntarioMD.ca](https://ontariomd.ca).

Quick Facts:

- According to the Ontario Medical Association, family doctors spend 19 hours per week on administrative tasks, including four hours writing notes or completing forms for patients.
- AI scribes will only be used during a visit if the patient gives their consent, and the privacy of patient health information will continue to be protected under the Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004.

Quotes:

"OntarioMD is proud to be leading this work on behalf of the province. OntarioMD is very encouraged by the early promise of AI as a response to the crushing administrative burden doctors face every day, and as a solution for the capacity challenges in Ontario's health-care system," said Robert Fox, OntarioMD's CEO. "The study results demonstrate the substantial benefits of AI scribes to automate time-consuming tasks that optimize primary care practices, and restore clinicians' joy in medicine."

"By reducing paperwork and streamlining routine tasks through AI and automation technology, clinicians are empowered to devote more of their time and expertise to what truly matters – their patients," said Dr. Mohamed Alarakhia, CEO of the eHealth Centre of Excellence. "This study represents a significant step towards a future where digital tools decrease the burden on clinicians and enhance the efficiency of primary care practices."

"Our team is proud to offer high-quality, large-scale evaluations of digital health technologies, such as AI scribes, working with our partners to inform the future of health-care delivery in Ontario, says Dr. Onil Bhattacharyya, Director of WIHV. The findings of this evaluation show the potential this technology has in addressing the issue of burdensome administrative work in primary care."

About OntarioMD:

OntarioMD (OMD) is a national leader in advancing artificial intelligence (AI) and other innovative technologies for primary care. The organization has 20 years of proven success in developing and deploying digital health solutions that improve patient care, and providing change management support to clinicians to use the solutions effectively. OMD is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Ontario Medical Association. It receives funding from the Province of Ontario to support family physicians, specialists, nurse practitioners and their staff to optimize their practices.

About the eHealth Centre of Excellence

The eHealth Centre of Excellence is a not-for-profit organization that assists clinicians and healthcare organizations across Canada with the meaningful and sustainable adoption of digital health tools. In addition to our change management and implementation support, we offer program planning expertise, as well as the design and customization of innovative solutions that fit seamlessly into clinical workflows.

About Women's College Hospital

For more than 100 years Women's College Hospital (WCH) has been developing revolutionary advances in healthcare. Today, WCH is a world leader in health equity and Canada's leading academic ambulatory hospital. It focuses on delivering innovative solutions that address Canada's most pressing issues related to population health, patient experience and system costs. A multidisciplinary research institute, the Women's College Research and Innovation Institute is one of only a few hospital-based research institutes worldwide to focus on health equity, leading innovative, high-impact health research that changes practice, changes policy, and changes lives.

www.womenscollegehospital.ca

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