Wilmington, N.C.-based Coastal Connect Health Information Exchange (CCHIE) is a community health information exchange (HIE) covering more than 800 physicians and 1.4 million patients. Founded in 2011, CCHIE continuously looks for new ways to help providers better track and manage patient care across its 11-county footprint.

After successfully adopting Medicity® Connect™, Medicity® Exchange™ and Medicity® Organize™ solutions, CCHIE decided to incorporate Medicity® Notify™, which delivers subscription-based, real-time clinical event notifications. By doing so, CCHIE hoped to support transitions of care and decrease readmissions.

AUTOMATED COMMUNICATIONS ENHANCE COLLABORATION AND WORKFLOW

CCHIE initially selected three technology-savvy physician champions to use Medicity Notify – two at physician practices and one at a hospital. Since the subscribers were already Medicity users, no separate login was required.

Alerts were set to two triggers: admissions and discharges. Subscribers could choose the delivery method that worked best within their existing workflow, either in real-time or at scheduled intervals. Users could also select their desired format to receive notifications through various ways:

- Text message
- HL7 transaction
- Secure email
- Online notification worklist

During the first week, 60 admission and 80 discharge notifications were sent. These alerts, which included diagnosis and admitting physician information, allowed providers to coordinate timelier follow up and better collaborate with other members of a patient’s care team. For example, one physician knew a patient needed back surgery, but was not aware the procedure had been scheduled until an alert was received. Another physician received alerts for five different admissions, but was only aware of one of them prior to getting the notifications. By receiving these updates in a timely fashion, these providers were able to proactively initiate follow-up care.
MAKING AN IMPACT

Word rapidly spread throughout CCHIE about the clinical and operational benefits of Medicity Notify. The program grew to 47 users spanning a variety of areas, including:

• **EMS.** Medicity Notify enables emergency department (ED) case managers, community paramedics and readmission team members to keep a closer eye on the top 30 utilizers, better coordinate care plans for these individuals and get involved in their care. For example, paramedics are able to decrease ambulance usage by educating frequent users on the best way to utilize emergency services. Care managers can also better track high-risk individuals who have been recently admitted or discharged from the ED so they can respond in hours instead of days.

• **PRIMARY CARE PHYSICIANS (PCPS).** Real-time discharge notifications enable PCPs to contact patients within 48 hours so they can schedule follow-up exams and qualify for higher reimbursement.

• **ORTHOPEDICS.** One of CCHIE’s orthopedic practices recently began using Medicity Notify to better monitor and manage patients undergoing knee, ankle and hip replacements. With Medicare now bundling payments for joint replacement surgeries, Medicity Notify supports users in their efforts to prevent 90-day readmissions and allows them to get more involved in post-surgery care.

• **PEDIATRICS.** Medicity Notify encourages more appropriate utilization by allowing pediatricians to redirect patients from the ED to more cost-effective settings like after-hours clinics. By doing so, these real-time alerts help pediatric practices meet target performance goals for quality measures.

• **HOME HEALTH.** Having real-time insight into clinical events like admissions and discharges helps home health providers conduct more personalized prevention and follow-up activities. One home health agency currently uses Medicity Notify along with CCHIE’s community health record to gain a more complete picture of a patient’s health status. With a more holistic view, providers can identify high utilizers, improve care transition activities and deliver better care.

REAPING THE BENEFITS

For subscribers across the continuum of care, Medicity Notify delivers a wealth of benefits. One of the biggest advantages for users so far has been how quickly and easily they can follow up on patients. Additional benefits include:

• **MORE PROACTIVE CARE.** Medicity Notify drives timely, targeted clinician engagement. This leads to more proactive care and helps users prevent costly readmissions for high-cost, high-risk procedures.

• **DECREASED ED UTILIZATION.** With real-time notifications, physicians can intervene and redirect patients to more appropriate facilities based on their needs. Users can also identify frequent ED utilizers and educate them about the advantages of scheduling an office visit instead of going to the ED.

• **TRANSITIONAL CARE MANAGEMENT.** By letting PCPs know when a patient is discharged, Medicity Notify enables physicians to provide timely transitional care management services for the new CPT codes 99495 and 99496.

• **IMPROVED CARE COORDINATION.** Being able to track the status and location of patients is extremely valuable, particularly for providers looking to better manage care transitions from hospitals and EDs to skilled nursing facilities, home health and other settings.

• **INCREASED PATIENT SATISFACTION.** In the past, many PCPs were not aware of every patient admission or discharge. As a result, patients did not receive follow-up calls after each hospital encounter. With Medicity Notify, provider-patient communications are greatly improved and patient satisfaction is on the rise.
“I can find out when my patients have been in the ED and read the discharge summary. It makes for good patient care because we can call patients and tell them we got the report from the ER. They are happy to know we are interested in their welfare and ongoing care.”

– Dr. Raja Bhat, Internal Medicine

LOOKING AHEAD
In the future, CCHIE believes Medicity Notify will become an essential tool for all providers, particularly for case managers and social workers that need to enhance workflow related to ED admissions.

Accountable care organizations (ACOs) have much to gain through the use of real-time event-based notifications as well. Having access to this data supports population health efforts by making it easier to follow specific cohorts of patients and coordinate treatment plans among care teams. Medicity Notify also streamlines workflow and drives new efficiencies. One of CCHIE’s regional ACOs recently switched from its existing alert solution to Medicity Notify because it was more user-friendly and offered more advanced features, such as the ability to send notifications directly to an electronic medical record, care management or clinical information system.

Going forward, CCHIE plans to expand the use of Medicity Notify across the organization. Leaders see the alerts as one more example of how CCHIE delivers real value to its participants. With access to real-time, event-based notifications, participating providers can better manage and monitor patients during critical care transitions, ultimately leading to better quality and better outcomes.

ABOUT MEDICITY
Medicity is a leading provider of network-enabled population health, connecting thousands of facilities in more than 100 of the nation’s leading private and public health information networks. Medicity powers connected communities that have shared and exchanged more than 3.6 billion clinical transactions to date. The Medicity Network provides the data foundation and integrated workflow solutions to enable today’s population health management objectives. Medicity solutions promote timely clinician engagement, improved transitions of care, reduction in duplicative services and the opportunity for patients to take an active role in their personal health. For more information, visit www.medicity.com.