



U. of Utah, Intermountain Win \$3.8M Grant to Develop Cancer Risk Management Platform

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NEW YORK (360Dx) – A team of researchers from the University of Utah, Intermountain Healthcare, and the Huntsman Cancer Institute have received a five-year, \$3.8 million grant from the National Cancer Institute to develop a platform for personalized cancer risk management.

The platform will combine electronic health record (EHR) technologies with clinical decision support (CDS) tools to enable physicians to tailor cancer screening decisions to specific patients based on their unique cancer risks. It is also being designed to facilitate data sharing across healthcare organizations.

"It is crucial that primary care physicians who are the frontline of care identify patients who are at high risk of developing cancer," Scott Narus, medical informatics director and chief clinical systems architect at Intermountain, said in a statement. "Early diagnosis and screening of cancer greatly increases the chances for successful treatment."

According to the grant's abstract, the platform will use EHR and patient-reported data to automate the risk stratification process at the population level; prioritize patients for case review by genetic counselors; and communicate risk and screening recommendations to primary care providers and patients.

Intermountain said that grant researchers will initially develop CDS algorithms and interventions to support individualized screening of breast and colorectal cancer based on the detection of patients at high risk for the diseases according to national cancer guidelines, as well as individualized evidence for providers and patients to better understand risk-appropriate screening strategies.

In order to assess the performance and interoperability of the platform, it will be integrated with Epic's EHR system for testing at University of Utah Health Care community clinics and Huntsman, and with Cerner's EHR system for testing at Intermountain.

"The goal of the CDS project is to enable a standards-based and scalable CDS platform for individualized cancer screening to be used across healthcare organizations," University of Utah researchers Guilherme Del Fiol and Kensaku Kawamoto, who are leading the project, added in the statement. "To achieve this goal, our team of researchers will extend and solidify two well-established open source CDS Web services based on rule logic (OpenCDS) and information retrieval (OpenInfobutton)."

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