



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Safeguarding patient data; secure messaging for Alberta physicians

EDMONTON – The [Alberta Medical Association](#) (AMA) and [Microquest Inc.](#), a leading provider of Electronic Medical Record (EMR) software ([Healthquest](#)), are excited to announce the signing of an agreement to provide Alberta physicians with AMA dr2dr Secure Messaging (AMA dr2dr); a secure, server-based messaging system that helps physicians and their staff manage the confidential, secure exchange of patient data.

Based on Microquest’s existing dr2dr system, the bank-level-encrypted AMA dr2dr Secure Messaging enables Alberta physicians to communicate quickly and securely from either their mobile (phone, tablet, laptop) or desktop devices, as they consult on patient cases and manage referrals, while avoiding the many security and inefficiency hazards of faxes, standard emails and instant messages.

“The current methods of e-communications being used by physicians, from the fax machine to email and texting are becoming increasingly out-of-step with health care e-communications and security best practices,” says Dr. Carl W. Nohr, AMA President.

With its centrally hosted website and accessibility from anywhere with Internet connectivity, AMA dr2dr Secure Messaging offers physicians a smart, secure solution for sharing confidential patient data, including accommodating attachments, such as test results, reports and scans. In addition, the seamless sharing of physicians’ area(s) of specialization, schedules and availability will help reduce specialist consultation wait times.

“One of the stand-out features of secure messaging,” continues Nohr, “is its e-referral capabilities. With dr2dr, family physicians and specialists can work together to reliably and securely initiate and follow-up on referrals. We know the crucial role that timing and clear communication play in ensuring our patients receive coordinated care.”

“AMA dr2dr secure messaging puts faxes and other instant messaging, with their many inefficiencies and vulnerabilities, to shame!” comments Dr. Brendan J. Bunting, a Ponoka-area family practitioner and member of the AMA Engagement Committee for secure messaging.

“Our members recognized that there must be a better, safer way to communicate, that puts our patients, the safeguarding of their personal health care information and the provision of prompt, coordinated and timely health care *first*,” adds Bunting.

Electronic Medical Records (EMR) integration

“Integration with the physician’s EMR is one of the most common requests that we receive,” says Brandon Blanck, V.P. of Microquest Inc. and Project Manager for AMA dr2dr Secure Messaging. “The power that comes with the EMR is immense, and with an Application Program Interface (API) that will support integration with a variety of EMRs, physicians can transmit a complete patient history through dr2dr without ever leaving their EMR.”

For more information on AMA dr2dr, visit:

<https://www.dr2dr.ca> or [AMA dr2dr Secure Messaging](#)

About Microquest Inc.

Established in 1993, Microquest Inc. is a privately held, Alberta-based software company specializing in the health care industry. Microquest's primary focus has been on its Healthquest EMR software, servicing over 2,500 physicians across Alberta. It began development on dr2dr in late 2014 and is looking forward to expanding the system via AMA dr2dr Secure Messaging throughout Alberta and beyond.

About the Alberta Medical Association

Alberta's physicians and the AMA are committed to putting **Patients First**[®], as the focus of a health care system that facilitates wellness and delivers patient- and family-centered care. The AMA stands as an advocate for its physician members, providing leadership and support for their role in the provision of quality health care.

Background:

- The need for a secure messaging system was identified by Alberta physicians at a meeting of the AMA Representative Forum in 2014. Subsequently, the AMA Engagement Committee began researching secure messaging products available in Alberta and in fall 2015, selected Microquest Inc.'s dr2dr system.
- Faced with the increasing prevalence of identity theft and fraud, coupled with the growing sophistication of electronic hacking software, the need for the development of secure, mobile-friendly e-communications platforms for physicians has become a priority across North America. With AMA dr2dr Secure Messaging, Alberta continues to be a leader in the establishment of best health care practices that support the AMA's vision of Patients First[®].
- AMA dr2dr Secure Messaging meets the industry regulations and standards for the secure transmittal of confidential patient data as identified by: the *Health Information Act (HIA)*; the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*; the *Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA)*; the *Personal Information Protection Act (PIPA)*; the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Alberta (OIPC); the College of Physicians & Surgeons of Alberta (CPSA); and Alberta Health.
- Ongoing development of AMA dr2dr includes expanding the system to incorporate other health care providers and organizations in order to provide truly collaborative care. This could include pharmacists, nurses, community health and social workers, psychologists and dentists, long-term care facilities, hospitals and public health centres. Ultimately, the system will be flexible enough to connect with other secure messaging systems in Alberta and other jurisdictions, creating a "secure messaging hub" that will connect allied health professionals and help prevent gaps in care that put patients at risk.
- Currently, several AMA dr2dr pilot projects involving individual physicians, specialty groups, clinics and Primary Care Networks are underway. An early rollout of AMA dr2dr is scheduled for April, with full deployment in July.

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