

# Project Athena Update: CRA Focus Group Findings



CANADIAN  
RHEUMATOLOGY  
ASSOCIATION

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The Canadian Rheumatology Association (CRA) in consultation with the Board of Directors identified practice and electronic medical records (EMR) inefficiency as a top priority for the CRA to address, based on a series of member consultations in 2022. Work under this stream will be dubbed Project Athena going forward.

To ensure a full understanding of the needs of members, CRA staff and consultant Dr. Karim Keshavjee held a focus group session with members to receive input on key streams of the project and identify best practices.

Based on the successful focus group with rheumatologists about the problems and potential solutions, the key findings are as follows:

- A. Several sites are very efficient and willing to share their lessons and practices. We are following up with the sites to start collecting and documenting best practices.
- B. Biologic reimbursement forms are particularly difficult for rheumatologists to fill out. Upon further investigation, it appears that several issues are not amenable to technological solutions, including requests for information that is not routinely added to EMRs and requests for information that rheumatologists feel is not germane to the patient's treatment plan. We will be actively seeking non-technological solutions for these issues.
- C. Documenting the patient's history is very time-consuming and family doctors already do this. We will investigate opportunities for data transfer.
- D. Getting new colleagues trained and up to speed on the use of the EMR is challenging. The development of simple videos to help with onboarding could be useful.
- E. There are several operational efficiency issues that practices face for which good technological solutions exist, such as collecting patient-reported experience and outcome measures and dealing with no-shows.

The CRA's Quality Care Committee will provide oversight for the EMR Optimization and the Quality Improvement workstreams of Project Athena. The oversight subcommittees will meet once a month to review materials submitted by the Project Athena consultants.

The CRA is pleased to answer any questions that members may have about the work of Project Athena. If you have any questions or would like to discuss this project, please contact CEO Dr. Ahmad Zbib at [azbib@rheum.ca](mailto:azbib@rheum.ca).