Insulin-pump software maps blood-glucose events

Monitoring diabetes patients’ care is getting a lot more technological, but in a user-friendly way.

Medtronic Inc. in Minneapolis, Minn., recently received FDA approval for its new CareLink Pro 3.0 Therapy Management. By analyzing data from a patient’s insulin pump, continuous glucose-monitoring (CGM) device, and blood-glucose meter, and presenting the results on one dashboard, the software gives providers a snapshot of key insulin-delivery and glucose information, pinpointing when patients experience low and high glucose patterns. By prioritizing those patterns, the software indicates times of day that are the biggest challenges for patients.

“We hope it will help improve the patient-physician encounter. With more analytics provided up front, it gives clinicians time to figure out what patients are doing and discuss things with them,” said Francine Kaufman, MD, chief medical officer and vice president of global medical, clinical and health affairs for Medtronic Diabetes.

The software’s Episode Summary also highlights key events that occur before hypo- and hyperglycemic episodes and offers therapy considerations to help providers make the most informed treatment decisions. “By reducing the amount of time it takes to interpret patient data, clinicians may have more time to spend with patients, fine-tuning and making adjustments to therapy and behavior,” a Medtronic statement said.

Medtronic’s recent STAR 3 Trial showed that 485 patients in all age groups (adults, teens, and children), using the Medtronic integrated system, achieved a statistically significant reduction in HbA1C without an increase in hypoglycemia.

Francine Kaufman

The CareLink Pro 3.0 joins an array of Medtronic products for diabetes care (www.medtronicdiabetes.com).

UPDATE: S.F. TOBACCO SUIT

San Francisco bans pharmacy tobacco sales in all locations

After much legal wrangling, pharmacies in San Francisco can no longer carry cigarettes. Although the San Francisco Board of Supervisors ruled in 2008 that stores with pharmacies could not sell tobacco products, the ordinance did not apply to grocery stores and big-box retailers with pharmacies.

San Francisco is now one of only a few cities in the United States (others are Boston and Richmond, Calif.) to pass ordinances barring pharmacy tobacco sales.

In 2008, San Francisco’s tobacco ordinance stipulated that grocery stores and big-box stores were not considered pharmacies, so the law did not apply to them. That ordinance was upheld when Phillip Morris and Walgreens sued the city. Phillip Morris executives were concerned about how the ordinance would affect their company’s advertising. In its complaint, Walgreens said that the law did not apply equally to all pharmacies in the city, requiring only some pharmacies to stop carrying tobacco products.

The case was dismissed.

In early November 2010, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors ruled that the sales of tobacco products would be prohibited in all stores with pharmacies, including big-box retailers and grocery stores. As a result, the ordinance was expanded to include 10 Safeway stores, 2 Lucky locations, and 1 Costco store in the city.

“The sale of cigarettes in a healthcare facility gives a false impression of cigarettes, that they are compatible with good health,” said Fred Mayer, RPh, MPh, a member of Drug Topics’ editorial advisory board and CEO of Pharmacists Planning Service Inc. (PPSI), which worked to get the San Francisco ordinance passed.

Other pharmacy and public health groups also support the ban. “We have had a policy for a number of years relating to eliminating the sale of tobacco products in pharmacies, just as we have programs to help pharmacists develop smoking-cessation programs,” said Jon Roth, CEO of the California Pharmacists Association.

Other cities with tobacco-free ordinances for pharmacies include Needham, Mass., Newton, Mass., and Westford, Mass., according to www.tobaccofreerx.org.

— Christine Blank, Contributing Editor