

IBM Watson collaborates with Epic and Mayo Clinic

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IBM Watson Health has announced that it is collaborating with Epic and Mayo Clinic to advance patient health by applying the cognitive computing capabilities of Watson to Electronic Health Records (EHRs).

As Watson's capabilities are applied to EHRs, patients and providers benefit from more rapid and thorough analysis of the medical factors that could impact an individual's health and wellness.

Epic has more than 350 customers - some of the largest and most-recognized healthcare systems in the world - and they exchanged more than 80 million medical records in the last 12 months, both within and outside the Epic community. Interoperability with Watson will enable these institutions to apply the cognitive capabilities of Watson to these records through secure, cloud-based Watson services, providing greater clinical insight to help personalize healthcare.

Together, Watson and Epic software could be used to develop patient treatment protocols, personalize patient management for chronic conditions, and intelligently assist doctors and nurses by providing relevant evidence from the worldwide body of medical knowledge, putting new insight into the hands of clinical staff. Providers will be able to share patient-specific data with Watson in real time, within workflows, allowing Watson to bring forth critical evidence from medical literature and case studies that are most relevant to the patient's care.

Epic plans to embed Watson's cognitive computing capabilities into its advanced decision support offerings through the use of open standards, including Health Level -7 (HL7) Fast Healthcare Interoperability Resources (FHIR) Application Programming Interfaces (APIs). Connecting through Epic's open API, the two systems will extend clinician expertise and help caregivers access knowledge more quickly.

"Accessing Watson's virtual brainpower from the Epic platform is energizing from a creative standpoint. We are bringing another level of cognitive computing and augmented intelligence to mainstream healthcare, to improve safety and outcomes for patients globally," said Epic president, Mr Carl Dvorak.

"Building on our recent announcement of IBM Watson Health, we are collaborating with Epic and Mayo Clinic in another important validation of the potential of Watson to be used broadly across the healthcare industry," said Mr Mike Rhodin, senior vice-president, IBM Watson. He added, "This is just the first step in our vision to bring more personalized care to individual patients by connecting traditional sources of patient information with the growing pools of dynamic and constantly growing healthcare information."

IBM and Mayo Clinic are already working together to pioneer cognitive computing in clinical trials matching for cancer patients. Watson's speed and accuracy allows physicians to enroll patients more quickly in the clinical trials that best meet individual patient needs. Over one million patients are seen at Mayo Clinic each year and more than 1,000 clinical trials are available to match patients to at any given time.

"Patients need answers, and Watson helps provide them quickly and more thoroughly. We are excited by Watson's potential to efficiently provide clinical trials information at the point of care," said Dr Steven Alberts, Mayo Clinic oncologist.