



## How SMRTNET Will Help Avoid Adverse Drug Events

Adverse drug events (ADEs) occur when a medication is given when the patient may be allergic to the medication or one of its components or a medication reacts negatively with another medication. It is not widely known among patients what a serious problem this can be.

According a report given at the recent Oklahoma Rural Health Association meeting adverse drug events account for:

30% of elderly hospital admissions

35% of elderly ambulatory visits

29% of ADEs require a medical visit

66% of nursing home patients have an ADE

The elderly are most a risk as they can be prescribed so many drugs from many different sources. We simply must do better, and many pharmacy programs including unit dose packaging and bar coding should help.

However, the real problem is that medical records containing patient medication information are scattered in too many places. And even when the information is appropriately gathered, that may not be adequate without a diagnostic history of the patient. As you know, some medications are not appropriate for some patients with certain medical conditions.

In order to lower the number of ADEs it is vitally important that medical history, allergies and reactions, and current and past medications from all sources be made available to providers all at one time. Further, this information must rapidly and accurately be updated each time a diagnosis, medication, or allergy and reaction are added. This is not practical in the world of scattered paper records.

However, the good news is that SMRTNET will provide that service. The network will gather allergies and reactions, previous and current diagnosis, medication history and perform cross checking to make sure that drug to drug and drug allergies do not put our patients at unnecessary risk.

The network has data from many local sources at this time and is in testing with specially designated "super-users" in each of the major health provider agencies. We expect this service to be available in November.