



# How Kentucky's Largest Healthcare System Integrated Advanced Technology & Analytics to Address the State's Opioid Crisis

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over the past decade, the number of **Kentuckians who die from drug overdoses has steadily climbed to more than 1,500 each year, and the state's rate of opioid prescriptions is 55% higher than the rest of the nation.** Norton Healthcare, a Kentucky-based healthcare provider serving patients throughout Greater Louisville, Southern Indiana, and the region, is proactively addressing the opioid crisis. Part of the organization's response includes partnering with Appriss Health to deploy leading technologies to integrate prescription drug monitoring program (PDMP) information into prescribers' electronic health record (EHR) systems, share PDMP information across state lines, and provide advanced analytic insights to improve opioid stewardship and help identify, prevent, and manage substance use disorder (SUD) within its patient population.



## ABOUT THE CUSTOMER

- **Largest hospital** system in the state
- Providing care at more than **250 locations**, including five Louisville hospitals with **1,837 licensed beds**, seven outpatient centers, and 14 immediate care centers
- Using cloud-based EHR solution **offered by Epic**

## THE CHALLENGE

Norton Healthcare's Narcotics Matrix Committee works continuously to address and define the organization's prescribing levels and patterns and identify areas for improvement. **Committee members and other decision-makers understood that providing clinicians with access to the right data could impact Norton Healthcare's overall prescribing levels and improve patient outcomes.** The committee prioritized integration of actionable data and analytics into clinician workflows to provide prescribers with necessary clinical data to improve clinical decision-making.

Additionally, they sought to make it easier for providers to comply with Kentucky and Indiana mandatory use laws, which require providers to check the PDMP before prescribing or dispensing a controlled substance. Serving patients in a metro area spanning two states often makes it necessary for Norton's physicians to query both states' PDMPs — Kentucky's KASPER and Indiana's INSPECT — to view the prescription history for patients who may live in one state and receive treatment and prescriptions in another. Not only that, research has shown that as many as one third of "doctor shoppers" cross state lines to see multiple physicians who will prescribe them narcotic painkillers and other prescription drugs.

Prior to integration, the process to view a patient's prescription history involved a physician's delegate searching the KASPER and INSPECT systems separately and loading the results into the patient's chart — a process that could take as long as 10 minutes.



## THE SOLUTION

Norton Healthcare utilizes the cloud-based EHR solution offered by Epic, a longtime partner of Appriss Health. According to Steven Heilman, M.D., Senior Vice President and Chief Health Innovation Officer with Norton Healthcare, knowing that Appriss Health had completed numerous successful PDMP integrations for other large health systems on the Epic platform was an important factor in the decision to partner with Appriss Health.

Joshua T. Honaker, M.D., MBA, FAAP, Chief Medical Administrative Officer, and James T. Jennings MD, Medical Director of Norton Medical Group – Adult Primary Care, serve on Norton Healthcare's Narcotics Matrix Committee and championed the implementation throughout the organization.

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- James T. Jennings MD

Medical Director of Norton Medical Group

The implementation involved integrating PDMP information and Appriss Health's advanced analytics tool directly into the Epic platform at the point of care. The tool provides patient risk analysis and other information in a visually interactive format that helps Norton Healthcare prescribers provide better patient safety and outcomes.

"We now have perspective of what goes on outside of our four walls and with doctors outside of our network," Jennings said. "The advantage of scoring the risk of overdose provides another level of protection, and we did not have an objective approach to that."

"It was unwieldy to have someone order the KASPER report and have it scanned into the patient's chart," Jennings continued. That's where Appriss Health has been really helpful. It's now easily visible when I'm seeing a patient."

## Norton Healthcare Local Needs, by the Numbers



According to the 2018 Overdose Fatality Report from the Kentucky Office of Drug Control Policy, **1,333 people died in Kentucky from drug overdoses in 2018.**

Jefferson County, which includes Louisville and borders the state of Indiana, had the most resident overdose deaths of any county in Kentucky.

As the first health care system in Kentucky to complete a PDMP-EHR integration of this size and scope, the project was not without risk.

Judy Holcomb, Associate VP of Patient Information Services, worked closely with the Appriss Health implementation team and staff at KASPER and the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services to coordinate testing scenarios and work through state policies to complete the project.

"It was challenging to be the first, but we were able to work the issues and complete the project successfully," Holcomb said.

## RESULTS

Post-integration, Norton Healthcare has charted an increase in physician compliance with mandatory use requirements, and providers have applauded the Appriss Health technology for its support during telemedicine visits, which have increased considerably in the wake of the COVID-19 crisis.

"We've had virtual care for several years now, but since the pandemic started, we ramped it up on a very scalable platform," Heilman said.

"We're up to more than 1,500 virtual visits per month with primary care providers and even some specialty providers. In terms of how that affects prescribing, it's been beneficial having the data visible in workflow while the doctor looks at the chart and the meds, while also interfacing with the patient. They have a complete view with all the systems working together."

Heilman said the feedback received from Norton providers has been overwhelmingly positive.

"We knew it would be good for the orthopedists, spine surgeons, and primary care physicians who treat patients looking for something to treat pain or anxiety. It really helps them with their assessments and reduced a lot of the time and effort and personnel required to get the data they need."

## ABOUT APPRISS HEALTH

Appriss Health provides trusted technology solutions to state governments, prescribers, pharmacies and hospitals to improve public health. We built the nation's most comprehensive standards-driven data integration service and platform to combat the nation's opioid epidemic. **This technology connects 43 states, 800,000 clinicians, 32,000 pharmacies, and 100,000 hospitals and health care facilities that support almost 90 million patient encounters per month**, providing clinicians seamless access to patients' complete prescription drug histories. Our real-time clinical decision support and data-driven insights are seamlessly integrated into the workflows of more than 130 EHRs and pharmacy management systems. Appriss Health's solutions support whole-person care that addresses physical and behavioral health conditions and substance use disorders as well as social determinants of health, resulting in lower overall healthcare spending and optimal outcomes.

*For more information, please visit [www.apprisshealth.com](http://www.apprisshealth.com)*

