

NHS Wales and Roche Diagnostics embark on blockchain journey with Digipharm

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Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board (CTMUHB) of NHS Wales, Roche Diagnostics, Digipharm and Life Sciences Hub Wales are launching a cutting-edge project to develop an innovative value-based contracting approach to pioneer sustainable procurement and improve the diagnosis of heart failure in patients.

All partners are working together to forge a new way of collaborative working for developing an outcome-based (payment by results) contracting model using Digipharm's blockchain platform, focusing on the value of the diagnostic test within the heart failure pathway and determining a fair payment structure based on the value generated. This will create sustainable outcomes that matter to patients and drive efficiencies for healthcare systems, with the long-term objective of creating shorter waiting times, quicker diagnostics, and better health outcomes.

The project will see procurement, clinical, operational and informatics teams at CTMUHB developing and implementing a Value-Based Health Care-led purchasing strategy for the [NTproBNP diagnostic test](#). This is a simple and quick test developed by Roche that is used for diagnosing heart failure, which works by detecting levels of proteins that is produced by the heart when it is under stress.

To optimise its use and improve patient management and outcomes, all partners will work together to understand how this diagnostic test is currently being used within the chronic heart failure pathway.

Dee Lowry, Head of Value-Based Health Care at CTMUHB, said:

"CTMUHB is committed to enabling and embedding Value-Based Healthcare approaches across our healthcare landscape in order to improve the outcome that matter most for our patients, staff and wider population.

"We are delighted to be working with our project partners on a collaboration built on trust and a shared vision to identify and reduce unwarranted variation in heart failure diagnosis, to improve patient outcomes, which in this project can also enable us to effectively and efficiently procure based out on outcomes."

Digipharm's [outcome-based digital contracting platform](#) built on the blockchain will be used to host and manage the project, with CTMUHB and Roche Diagnostics using this to develop a collaborative procurement strategy that is underpinned by data and automatically executed using smart contracts. This will include adapting existing pathway approaches to diagnosing heart failure patients using NTproBNP, understanding patient pathways, and developing processes that will inform procurement decisions.

Ahmed Abdulla, CEO of Digipharm, said:

"This is an exciting and innovative collaboration that is the first of its kind globally. Typically, outcome-based reimbursement agreements have been implemented for drugs and medical devices however the focus of this project is a diagnostic test, which will not only impact clinical outcomes but also provide financial and operational efficiencies that will transform the way resources are allocated and care is provide. Due to these complexities and numerous data points of interest, automation using our system will eliminate the administrative burden of managing and processing this agreement."

Chris Hudson, Director of Access and Innovation for Roche Diagnostics UK and Ireland said:

"Roche Diagnostics is committed to working with healthcare professionals and organisations to create efficiencies in patient care. A particular focus for us is Value Based Healthcare (VBHC) and Value Based Procurement (VBP) but we also know that one organisation is not going to solve the complex issues around VBHC and VBP in isolation. That is why we are excited to be involved in this collaboration and committed to investing in this project to help bring the benefits of VBHC and VBP to the NHS in Wales."

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Throughout the project, Life Sciences Hub Wales will be providing management and communications support – convening and coordinating partners.

Cari-Anne Quinn, CEO of Life Sciences Hub Wales, said:

“Life Sciences Hub Wales is delighted to be collaborating with CTMUHB, Digipharm and Roche on such a groundbreaking project. Value-Based Health Care focuses on patient outcomes and improved efficiencies for our healthcare services, applying the learnings from this project can set the standard for pioneering value-led procurement processes.”

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