

innovator

Data Mining

Two pharmacists turn little bits into a useful big picture

BY VICTORIA FULFORD

Technology plays an ever-expanding role in pharmacy practice, so why not mix real-world pharmacy expertise with database technologies? In the case of Toronto-based Cubic Health Inc., a company founded by pharmacists Chris von Heymann and Michael Sullivan, the combination has produced a series of powerful analytical tools to help companies measure, understand and manage their employee benefits program drug spending.

Cubic Health's SFC Therapeutic Classification System is an electronic database that makes sense of drug classification. The system uses a three-tier structure—System, Function, Class, hence the name SFC—to isolate information on more than 33,000 medications. Products are classified according to the general physical area of the body being addressed, the specific disease state the drug is designed to treat and the pharmacological class it belongs to. More than just numbers on a screen, this data can help companies and their benefits consultants track employee drug usage and shape practical strategies to improve employee health.

"Through our SFC Therapeutic Utilization Series reports, which include comprehensive breakdowns by amount paid, number of claims and number of unique claimants within different disease states, employers are able to target key areas with focused health and wellness [initiatives]," says von Heymann. "Such clarity and understanding provide another opportunity for pharmacists to get into the workplace and deliver any number of great programs to cover such areas as cardiovascular disease, high cholesterol, diabetes and asthma." ❧