

For Immediate Release

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Richmond Family Clinic Transitions Practice to Electronic Health Records, E-prescribing

If you've visited the Richmond Family Clinic lately, you've probably noticed some changes. Patient records are moving from paper to paperless. Prescriptions are handled electronically and patients who receive follow-up care at the Clinic after an ER visit can be assessed quickly—with a complete record of the ER stay conveniently accessible from a laptop.

Last summer, Richmond Family Clinic started its migration from paper scripts to what's called e-prescribing that enables a prescription to be sent to a pharmacy directly from the provider's computer or handheld device. Among patient benefits are improved safety and overall care. Specifically, illegibility from handwritten scripts is virtually eliminated and adverse drug interactions are automatically flagged.

After becoming acclimated with e-prescribing, the Clinic followed-up with an electronic health record roll-out that transitioned the practice from paper records to paperless records. "We started with e-prescribing first to get use to it," said Dr. Jamie Honeycutt, M.D. and co-owner of the practice. "After that, we went in [full force] with the EHR transition. It was a learning curve at first, but it's going really well."

If wondering why such drastic changes and why now, it can be summed up in two words, "Meaningful Use."

Meaningful Use and EHRs Simplified

Meaningful Use, a mandate from the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act through the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), requires health care providers to use electronic medical records (EMRs) and electronic health records (EHRs) in a manner that maximizes efficiencies for both the patient and the provider. By 2017, health care practitioners are expected to have fully integrated EMR or EHR systems in place. Providers who meet Meaningful Use guidelines will receive financial incentives. Those who don't will be penalized.

EHRs are patient health records stored in a digital format and provide the following benefits: Improve quality of care, efficiencies and patient safety; store complete health information including medical history, medications and test results in a digital format that can be shared with other practitioners; improve coordination of care between providers while reducing redundancies in care and medical record inaccuracies; protect patient data from damage and loss; allow patients control of their health by enabling full access to their medical records; and provide guaranteed privacy and protection of patient health information (PHI)

"The patient response to the EHR has been very positive," Honeycutt said. "They seem to be happy with it."

"They can access their health records and feel more in control of their health care," said Shelly Pratt, the Clinic's office manager.

"They are also reassured by the fact that the system helps eliminate medical errors."

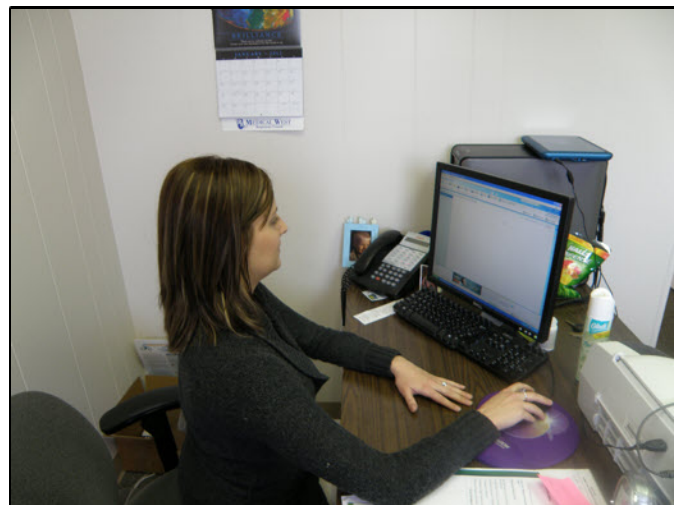
Honeycutt and Pratt added that the EHR system allows quick and easy retrieval and electronic submittal of health summaries requested by other providers.

Next Steps for Richmond Family Clinic

As for what's next, the Clinic is poised to purchase more equipment to support EHR transition efforts. "We'll get more scanners and a signature pad," Pratt said adding that there is more work to do. "We are still using paper charts for past medical histories. It will be nice when we are totally paperless."

Richmond Family Clinic received six convertible EHR-equipped computers that also support e-prescribing through a health information technology partnership with the Health Care Collaborative of Rural Missouri's (formerly the Health Care Coalition of Lafayette County). The non-profit recently received a \$900,000 Rural Health Technology Development Grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to help providers meet Meaningful Use guidelines.

For more information, contact the HCC at 660.259.2440 or visit HCCNetwork.org.



Dr. Honeycutt logs in to EHR system.