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MEDIA RELEASE

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Electronic Patient Records access expands at MHA

Middlesex Hospital Alliance (MHA) took another step on the road to fully electronic patient records in February, with expanded access to Electronic Patient Records (EPR) for clinical staff.

“This technology enhances the ability of clinical staff to be able to view a patient's information electronically from both MHA sites, but also from other participating hospitals in the Thames Valley Hospital Partnership – including the London Health Sciences Centre (LHSC),” Dr. Jon Dreyer, chief of staff at MHA’s Four Counties Health Services, says.

“Paperless record keeping is the direction of the future,” Dr. Dreyer says. “It streamlines care at our MHA sites and across the system. And, this technology builds upon our other electronic systems, such as PACS,” he adds. The EPR holds information such as history and physicals, discharge summaries, operative notes, consultation reports, lab tests and diagnostic imaging results.” Not all documents are electronic yet. For example, nursing notes and physician orders are still paper based.

The process of keeping paperless electronic records at MHA began in late 2005 when all this patient information at FCHS and SMGH began to be stored electronically to create an Electronic Patient Record (EPR). As of the end of February 2008, healthcare professionals at the MHA have access to a wider range of stored information in the Electronic Patient Record.

“The information available to a clinician is expanded now. Previously, you could only see the information your site generated,” Lorraine Craig, Manager, Health Information Services at MHA, says. “Now, when a patient is transferred, for example, from LHSC to FCHS the nursing staff can log in using that patient's ID, and see the medications the patient was taking in London, along with the meds prescribed at FCHS. Patient care and patient safety are improved because nursing staff have immediate access to the medication information from all sites. Efficiency is increased because the latest lab and x-ray results don't need to be repeated. And, there is no waiting for someone at another busy health centre to fax additional information to you,” she says.

Mike Mazza, CEO of MHA says, “Patient care benefits from this ‘One Patient, One Electronic Record’ technology. This enhancement puts us one step closer to our goal of a total electronic patient record.”