

Fountain Springs News

Leaders in Technology

In January of 2002, Fountain Springs became the first long term care facility in the state of South Dakota to implement wireless Electronic Medical Records (EMRs.) Electronic Medical Record (EMR) has many advantages to both staff and residents, with time savings and safety being the two areas listed as the most important.

The EMR saves charting time in many ways, allowing more time to be spent with residents and less with paper. For example, staff no longer have to wait for others to look at or update information in a patient's chart, as they can go to any computer or office and chart at the same time as others. Nurses can chart once and data is automatically communicated to others in the building, such as when a therapy order is entered and is automatically e-mailed to the Administrator, Therapy Department, Director of Nursing, and the billing office. Multiple clients can be charted on at the same time with the click of a button, such as when annual flu shots are given. Data retrieval is immediate and anything can be isolated from the system for any time frame, such as asking how many residents were on antibiotics for the last quarter or how many residents fell on a given shift during a specific time frame. The ability to retrieve this data quickly assists in *Quality Improvement* efforts. Data also automatically pulls to the report forms, assessment forms and to the pharmacy when needed.

EMRs also provide a certain level of safety. They are easy to read and handwriting does not have to be analyzed. There are safety warnings and reminders built in, such as a warning screen popping up to notify that a resident is allergic to a medication. The system also identifies side effects of medications for the nurses. It also automatically checks to assure all medications have been signed as given after the medication passes, notifying the nurse if she missed a medication by providing a summary report. The computer also reminds the nurse to chart the results of any medications at a later time, such as in the case of documenting the effectiveness of a pain pill.

In February of 2007, Fountain Springs Administrator Mary Sateren served on a focus group for the South Dakota Electronic Medical Record Assessment project (SDEHRA) in an effort to identify practices of health information exchange and/or barriers to electronic health information in the state. Mary also spoke on the topic of EMRs at the fall session of the American College of Health Care Administrators in 2007. As of April 2008, a facility in Watertown, South Dakota became the second in the state to implement paperless charting, after Sateren went there to assist them in the process.

From the nursing assistant to the dietary department, all staff is proud of their ability to utilize computerized charting and be leaders in technology in the state of South Dakota. Residents and their families also benefit greatly from the use of this new technology.

