

NEWS RELEASE



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ELECTRONIC MEDICAL RECORDS COMING TO ER AT HALIFAX REGIONAL

Roanoke Rapids, NC (August 7, 2011)—Halifax Regional takes another major step in technology Tuesday when Electronic Medical Records come to the Emergency Care Center.

Technology is playing a key role in reform of healthcare as hospitals and physicians redesign how they provide care to improve quality and contain cost, says Will Mahone, president of Halifax Regional.

“We are continuing to invest our resources to add value and improve access for our patients and the community,” he said as the staff makes final preparations to the new system “to go live” Tuesday.

An electronic medical record is a digital and portable version of the current paper file system of a patient’s health information that is accessible to doctors, nurses and technicians. Halifax Regional already has electronic medical records in most departments.

Approximately 30 new computers have been delivered to the Emergency Care Center and miles of wiring have been installed. Many of the computers are wireless laptops.

The Emergency Care Center will treat 41,000 people this year, an increase of one percent over last year. Approximately 50 employees and 20 physicians and providers work in the 24/7 operation.

Initially, patients may wait longer as the new system “takes getting used to, so we hope patients will understand,” says Karen Daniels, RN, vice president of nursing. “In many ways, it is like when we learned to ride a bicycle,” she says.

“But over time, it will contribute to better quality of care and lower waiting times,” says Daniels. “There will be fewer errors in prescriptions and legibility of hand writing is no longer an issue.”

“Physicians in the ER can spend more time with patients at the bedside,” said George Melone, MD, an emergency medicine physician at Halifax Regional. “We will not have to wait for the medical records department to find results of x-rays or lab work or patient histories,” he added.

“It is difficult to overstate the benefits,” Melone continued. “Electronic medical records will lead to quicker and improved decision-making. Error rates will decrease and

communication with be more accurate.” The system also will provide improved instructions for patients when they are discharged from the Emergency Care Center.

Charlotte Ferguson, RN, the manager of the Emergency Care Center says having a complete electronic record will “change everything about how we do business. Our nurses will be more efficient, can track treatment of patients, communicate better and measure performance better,” she said.

“All of us are very excited about the new technology, and the opportunity it provides us to improve care for our patients,” she added.

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About Halifax Regional

Halifax Regional Medical Center is licensed for 204 beds, including psychiatric and nursery. A non-profit organization, Halifax Regional is fully accredited by the Joint Commission. For more information, visit www.halifaxregional.org.