

CHC takes information technology to new level

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

HealthSync System to Connect Region's Healthcare Providers, Benefit Patients

Cascade Healthcare Community, parent company to St. Charles Medical Center, announced this week its intention to move forward with the next major phase in its transition to fully deploy electronic records for patients throughout the region.

The new initiative, called HealthSync, is unprecedented in scope for the region, and will set the bar for similar technology and healthcare initiatives on a national level. Hospitals across the region are currently using multiple systems (paper and technology), and caregivers, physicians and most importantly, patients, will benefit from the move to an interconnected system which will streamline processes and contain all necessary health information in one place.

Cascade Healthcare Community (CHC) first implemented a limited electronic medical records (EMR) system in 2004 at St. Charles Bend and Redmond. The new technology system is very different from the current EMR, which represents only a fraction of the scope of the HealthSync project. HealthSync incorporates financial, materials management and numerous other systems in addition to the clinical information systems. HealthSync will automate processes involving patient registration, billing, human resources, general accounting, lab, pharmacy, radiology, nurse/physician orders and documentation and surgical services. The project also extends beyond St. Charles and involves all four of the region's hospitals: St. Charles in Bend and Redmond and CHC's two managed facilities, Mountain View Hospital District (MVHD) in Madras and Pioneer Memorial Hospital (PMH) in Prineville.

"We're very pleased to be moving into the next stage with our technology," explained Marilyn Black, Senior Vice President of Information Services for CHC. "Patients throughout the region will benefit from this because their caregivers and physicians will have instant access to critical, personal health information when they need it most. Let's say a patient from Madras is injured in Prineville – caregivers at PMH would be able to instantly access that patient's record so they could make the best possible healthcare decisions based on accurate, up-to-date information."

A multi-disciplinary team of 100 caregivers and physicians from around the region participated in a rigorous process for choosing a vendor to provide the technological backbone for the new HealthSync system. The team selected McKesson Corporation, a top-ranked Fortune 500 company and the nation's largest

healthcare services company.

The new HealthSync system should be implemented for financial and business systems at CHC, MVDH, and PMH by first quarter 2008. Clinical systems will be implemented by the end of 2008. Representatives from different departments within each hospital throughout the region will be involved in building, testing and implementing a system that is tailored to their needs.

For Marj Gold, Director of Mother/Child Services in Bend and Redmond, that's good news. "Right now, we use three different systems for electronic patient records, and we're excited about the idea of having everything we need in one system," she explained. "Nursing is an art form, and sometimes technology can draw a nurse's attention in several different directions. But with the new HealthSync system designed by McKesson, we'll have our hands free more often to focus on the patient and not on the keyboard."

Implementation of the HealthSync system will represent a significant technological step forward for CHC, continuing a commitment made several years ago. "When St. Charles first adopted electronic medical records in 2004, we were ahead of the curve in meeting President George W. Bush's goal that most Americans have computerized medical records available within a decade," explained Jim Diegel, FACHE, President and CEO for CHC. "It's exciting to be working closely with our partners in Madras and Prineville to take the next step not only in connecting our systems to each other, but in giving our patients the convenience of having such a variety of services – lab results, billing, pharmacy – interconnected this way."

The primary goal of HealthSync is to improve patient safety and care throughout the region. HealthSync is also expected to reduce physician and caregiver hassle factors associated with using multiple systems, streamline financial and materials management, provide information for effective performance reporting, produce infrastructure for efficient and secure sharing of information, and provide a healthcare technology platform to support regional change in the future.

"McKesson is honored to partner with CHC in this important initiative to enhance the quality of care for its community," said Duncan James, group president, Health Systems, McKesson Provider Technologies. "We bring to bear not only the best software and automation solutions in the industry, but enterprisewide expertise through a single point of accountability. This helps ensure our customers achieve faster, sustainable

results as they work to transform the care delivery process.â€•

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