

Faith Regional Health Services Launches Electronic Health Records System
Hospital strives to create a new culture while improving care and enhancing patient relations

(Norfolk, Neb. – June 28, 2010) -- Faith Regional Health Services is improving clinical care and the overall patient experience with the implementation of an electronic health records system. On June 20th, the same day that Faith Regional opened up its new bed tower, the hospital flipped the switch on the new technology, which promises to rid the hospital of costly and cumbersome paper charts.

“We see electronic records as the number one opportunity we have right now to have a positive impact on clinical care. With electronic records, we can provide safer and better care to our patients,” says Jim Sinek, CEO of Faith Regional. “Just think about written physician orders and how easy it is to make mistakes with spelling or even a decimal point – mistakes that could cause considerable harm to patients. With an electronic system, the likelihood of those mistakes is greatly reduced. An electronic system also makes it possible to get the latest clinical information right to physicians and nurses at the bedside – and that can make a huge difference in the quality of clinical care that we deliver here at Faith Regional.”

In addition, the electronic records system will enable nurses to spend more time at the patient bedside. Instead of migrating to a nursing station to complete paper charts, nurses can use computers to enter notes right at the patient bedside. Nurses and doctors can even display the chart on flat screen televisions, making it possible to involve patients in their own care.

“We implemented the electronic records system the same day that we opened our new bed tower – and that created a good deal of organizational excitement,” says Linda Miller, R.N., chief nursing officer. “By doing all of this at once, we are on our way to creating a new culture here at Faith Regional, one where the emphasis is clearly placed on developing a positive relationship with our patients.”

Although EHRs are more common in larger hospitals, Faith Regional has upped its clinical care game by working closely with Quammen Healthcare Consultants, an Orlando, Fla.-based healthcare information system and business consultancy, to implement EDGE (Electronic Data to Gain Excellence), an EHR that is powered by Soarian Clinicals from Siemens, Malvern, Pa.

Quammen’s unique implementation methodology has made it possible to create positive energy around the project, evidenced by the fact that physicians entered almost 70% of orders electronically on the first day that the system was up and running – a milestone that many other hospitals don’t reach for months or even years. Such adoption puts Faith Regional on the fast track toward qualifying for incentive funds available through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

The success of the initial implementation also puts Faith Regional in a position to have a positive impact on care throughout the region, as the electronic records system could potentially be shared with the critical access hospitals that refer patients into the regional referral center.

“We have 11 hospitals in the region that send us patients when it is determined that the patient needs something that these smaller rural facilities are not equipped to provide. Imagine how much quicker and more effectively our doctors and nurses can treat these patients if they can just tap into a computer system and have all the critical clinical data from the referring hospital that they need to make a diagnosis and treatment plan right at their fingertips. Our clinicians could start formulating a plan as the patients are in transit to our facility, thereby enabling them to provide a higher level of care more efficiently. And, in situations where minutes and seconds count and where making an informed decision is a must, that could mean the difference between life and death,” Sinek says.