

Sutter launches new record system

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After months of planning and training, Sutter Regional Medical Foundation on Monday rolled out an electronic record-keeping system, "an advanced and secure patient-care technology," foundation officials said.

SRMF staff and clinicians at the Mason Street facility in Vacaville and Martin Road facility in Fairfield have begun using the system. Other care centers will roll out the new technology every three weeks, with the final care center going "live" March 16, said Sy Neilson, a spokesman for the Fairfield-based foundation.

The new system provides clinicians with instant access to the information needed to provide better, safer and more convenient care to patients.

"Sutter doctors will have access to any patient's medical record no matter where they travel," Neilson said.

An electronic health record (EHR) is a computerized version of a paper health record. It has all the information a paper health record has in it, such as medical history.

"One of the great benefits of the EHR is that patients will have one electronic health record that can be quickly accessed by caregivers," Neilson said in a press release.

The EHR gives clinicians another important tool to help patients stay healthy, he added. It generates automatic reminders to clinicians so that they can notify patients of important checkups, tests or immunizations. The EHR also connects patients to health information they can take home after appointments to help them further understand and follow the course of care their clinicians have recommended.

"All it takes is a few clicks of the mouse and we're now able to quickly and easily access information about our patients," says Zoe Berna, a family medicine physician who practices at SRMF's Vacaville care center.

Having one electronic health record that is shared among clinicians and locations makes it easier to review a patient's history of test results. Clinicians are immediately notified when their patients' test results are available. There is no wait time for test results to be transferred from the lab.

The EHR automatically crosschecks any new prescriptions being considered to ensure there are no negative interactions with allergies and current medications. An alert message will immediately notify clinicians of any potential drug or allergy interaction.

Another feature of Sutter Health's EHR is MySutterOnline, an Internet tool that provides patients with quick and secure online access to portions of their electronic health record.

"Our goal is to have any many patients as possible participate in MySutterOnline," said Carolyn Appenzeller, chief operating office at SRMF.

Sutter Regional Medical Foundation is a locally governed and managed affiliate of Sutter Health, a not-for-profit network of physicians and hospitals.

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