EpicCare Ambulatory was on display for the first time this May. A gathering of 300 people representing the three Yale New Haven Health System hospitals, Yale Medical Group (YMG), Northeast Medical Group, as well as community physicians attended a program that demonstrated how the Electronic Medical Record (EMR) program for physician practices would work when it is introduced this fall.

“The feedback received from attendees about the program was extremely positive,” said Lisa Stump, Epic Project director. “The physicians who led some of the demonstrations displayed their confidence and knowledge of the application and clearly featured the software’s agility and flexibility. It was a high energy day.”

During the program, audience members saw how staff would create the patient encounter in the Electronic Medical Record. They learned how patient diagnostic tests, including blood work and X-rays, are ordered and how results are returned electronically to the doctor who then communicates those results to the patient via that patient’s “MyChart” account. The ability to send electronic prescriptions to the pharmacy is another feature of EpicCare. (See sidebar E-prescribing – Streamlines The Prescription Process)

According to Michael Schilsky, MD, medical director of Adult Liver Transplant, Yale-New Haven Transplant Center, and associate professor of Medicine and Surgery, Yale School of Medicine and a member of our Epic Physician & Provider Advisory Group, “EpicCare is going to improve how we deliver patient care. It will streamline how we gather important information from our patients, communicate with colleagues and share results. It is going to make noticeable improvements in all our practices.”

With the creation of one Electronic Medical Record for each patient, a patient receiving care from multiple physicians, or at one of the three system hospitals, will have a single, complete clinical record that will be available at each site of care. This makes for safer visits and better outcomes for patients.

“When we go live with EpicCare, we won’t just be installing software – we will re-engineer the way we work together to deliver care. That should mean less waiting time for our patients and improved communication and support among the healthcare team throughout the encounter,” said Stump.

No More Paper Charts

Among the biggest and most exciting changes coming to Greenwich Hospital, is how we create, store and share medical information about patients. Electronic Medical Records, or EMRs, are computerized records that can be shared by doctors, hospitals and patients. While computers have been in medical practices for some time, paper still dominates the profession and record keeping can be hodge-podge. Most doctors have excellent memories, but a paper chart is bulky, inefficient, and sometimes a file or data gets misplaced. With a single patient record spanning all points of care, lost information becomes a thing of the past. With an EMR, a patient will also have access to their most up-to-date list of a patient’s prescriptions, which should help the entire care team ensure accurate medication reconciliation and safer, effective care. Finally, e-prescribing can also help demonstrate “meaningful use” of EpicCare, which can help earn incentive payments from Medicare and Medicaid.

E-prescribing Streamlines The Prescription Process

Within EpicCare, providers have the ability to send a prescription electronically to a pharmacy – without using a prescription pad or printing out a prescription that has to be signed. EpicCare will also make it much easier to see an accurate, up-to-date list of a patient’s prescriptions, which should help the entire care team ensure accurate medication reconciliation and safer, effective care. Finally, e-prescribing can also help demonstrate “meaningful use” of EpicCare, which can help earn incentive payments from Medicare and Medicaid.

Example: Sending Prescriptions to a Pharmacy

To write a prescription, you fill out a template in the order entry section of EpicCare. You can also create a “favorites” list, making it fast and easy to find and prescribe frequently used medications. Once you complete a prescription, you will be able to send it electronically through EpicCare to a pharmacy. A list of pharmacies that accept e-prescriptions is provided, enabling providers to easily identify whether a patient’s medications can be e-prescribed to his or her preferred pharmacy.

What is “Meaningful Use”?

You may have heard the phrase “meaningful use” in the discussions throughout our transition period. The Federal Electronic Health Record Incentive Program, more commonly referred to as “meaningful use,” specifies the criteria for using certified EMRs that hospitals and physicians must meet to receive federal incentive payments.

Examples include providing patients with a clinical summary of each office visit (as EpicCare does with the After Visit Summary) as well as electronically generating and transmitting permissible prescriptions.

Demonstrating “meaningful use” would make YNHHS eligible for federal incentive payments, and will demonstrate how we are leveraging this technology to improve how we deliver care. Hospitals and physicians unable to demonstrate meaningful EMR use by 2015 will face penalties from the body that administers Medicare and Medicaid.

Looking ahead to 2016, if we can demonstrate meaningful use, it is possible to receive Medicare and Medicaid incentive payments. For more information on meaningful use, please visit the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services website.

To learn more about EpicCare, please visit www.epiccare.org or call 1-800-877-9691.
Seeing and Believing in the Potential of Epic EMR continued...

Comprehensive EMR To Deliver Seamless Patient Care: Asis Medical Associates

From the moment a patient walks into Asis Medical Associates, an obstetrics and gynecology private practice with offices in New Haven and Hamden, Office Manager Carol Heenan predicts the environment will become a more efficient, calm and tranquil experience with the installation of Epic. Asis Medical Associates is the first community practice to sign on to participate in our Epic offering.

From patient check-in, to charting, to billing and reimbursement, Epic’s EMR and its practice management will address Asis Medical’s unique clinical and administrative needs in a single integrated system. “For me, having both our practice management and EMR systems on one platform is the most exciting feature,” said Heenan.

With specialty content focused on the needs of maternity care, Asis physicians can collect and view details through the different phases of pregnancy, including labor and delivery, when used in conjunction with EpicCare Ambulatory and EpicCare Inpatient. Automatic linkages between a mother’s and newborn’s charts also allow physicians and clinicians to easily document and review information for both patients.

Sean Flaherty, MD/PhD, who leads the practice’s transition to Epic, says another positive experience, will be the ability for patients to access information through their MyChart accounts. “Patients will appreciate getting information online. The integration of multiple specialties as well as labs and imaging studies should minimize duplicate ordering. Not only will this be a cost benefit to the medical system, but with many patients self-funding their insurance through high-deductible plans, it should reduce patient expenses and the frustration of multiple blood draws or duplicate imaging,” said Flaherty.

The other providers in the practice are Maria Asis, MD, and Ami Acharya, MD/MPH.

While Asis has essentially been paperless for the past four years, Flaherty sees the move to Epic as the final step toward a truly paperless, integrated EMR. “Epic was the most comprehensive EMR with appropriate interfacing to necessary labs and radiology for seamless patient care. The current pricing for the Yale community physicians is by far the most competitive,” noted Flaherty.

As part of its service, the Epic Project team conducts on-site technical assessments to determine if any hardware and network improvements are necessary at a particular practice. According to Heenan, “The technical staff did a great job of assessing our needs and answering my questions during the walk-through. I can’t wait for this system.”

To see how Epic can enhance your practice, please visit our Project website where we list details about community physician events, or call 203-200-EPIC.

ProjectEpic.ynnh.org

Q&A

Q. When will I be trained in how to use Epic?

A. Learning a system of this magnitude will take time and practice. To help you hit the ground running at go-live, we have developed a robust training program based on successful Epic installations. Training is a blended approach that combines classroom and e-learning activities. Each user will receive training based on their role (i.e., physician, nurse, practice manager), and training is mandatory. Because ambulatory care practices have go-live dates this fall, we are focusing our training efforts on these practices first.

We will track e-learning assignments and class registration using Healthstream, a learning management system used by the Yale New Haven Health System. Each user will be enrolled in the Healthstream system. At the appropriate time, we will collect information from each staff member in order to create IDs and passwords for access to the system. Once active in the system, users can complete their assigned e-learning courses. Scheduling of instructor-led classes will be coordinated with your practice and/or department manager. Current hospital employees will continue to use current IDs and passwords to access the Healthstream system.

In addition to training for all users, a select group of individuals – called SuperUsers – will spend time learning the system at an expert level. These folks play a role in helping users get ready for the new electronic health record system. They will be available to help answer questions and lend support.

MyChart: What Physicians & Clerical Support Staff Need to Know

Once Epic Ambulatory goes live, our patients will have easier access to their medical information through MyChart, a secure online portal. Patients will be able to view most of their medical records, ask questions of their healthcare providers, fill out health questionnaires and request appointments. Here’s a look at the features of MyChart and how they can help you work more efficiently.

Medical Record

Patients can view (but not change) most of their health information collected in EpicCare, including:

• Medical history
• Current health issues
• After Visit Summary
• Test results (Due to meaningful use parameters, we will send lab results to patients after a three-day period.)
• Medications
• Allergies
• Immunizations
• Preventive care recommendations/reminders

Message Center

Patients can send electronic messages through MyChart to the InBaskets of members of their healthcare team. Each physician or clinic office will create clinical and clerical pools – groups set up with common access and message routing – where staff can view and respond to messages from patients.

Patients can:
• Ask medical advice questions
• Request a medication renewal
• Fill out health questionnaires
• Request an appointment

How MyChart Benefits Physicians & Clerical Support Staff

Faster, safer communication

No more phone tag. Providers and staff can respond to questions from patients with a quick and secure message through MyChart.

Fewer phone calls

Healthcare organizations using MyChart have seen a 16 to 17 percent drop in patient-related phone calls.

Freeing up support staff

With most key health information available to patients through MyChart, nurses and other support staff spend less time printing out and mailing items like letters, medication lists and immunization records. That means more time to focus on other job responsibilities.

Signing Up Patients for MyChart

Patients can sign up in their doctor’s office, during hospital discharge or during a clinic visit. Patients can also receive an access code in their After Visit Summary that allows them to sign up at home. All they need to sign up is the access code and an email address. We can also mail patients an access code before their first visit.

Phone: 203.200.EPIC   Email: ProjectEpic@ynnh.org