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## **Electronic Health Record Launches @ SSM DePaul Health Center**

(Bridgeton, MO) Paper medical charts become a thing of the past at midnight on August 1 at SSM DePaul Health Center. That's when the hospital is slated to go-live with a completely electronic health record (EHR), proven to improve patient care and safety.

Hundreds of physicians and staff from SSM DePaul have spent months training on the new EHR system, and are ready to flip the switch from paper to digital records. The change will be dramatic and will put us in the top 1-percent of hospitals nationwide for this level of EHR implementation.

Medical records will no longer take days to make the journey from one SSM physician to another, or risk getting lost. Clinicians will have instant access to patients' charts to review previous medical conditions or current test results, or to chart a diagnosis. Medications prescribed are automatically checked against other prescribed drugs, diagnoses and lab results, for possible suggested changes in treatment. Improved data access is also expected to reduce wait times.

Physicians can log into the secure system from virtually anywhere and see their patient's records, resulting in a faster response and reducing the chance that an important piece of information may be missed. With the installation of an additional 670 computers, there will also be a computer available in every patient room.

"Making the switch to electronic health records is about improving the speed and accuracy of communication, from doctor to patient, and doctor to doctor," said Pat Komoroski, president of SSM DePaul. "When you improve and stream-line communications, you improve patient care, and that's the goal."

DePaul is the 7th hospital in the SSM Health Care system to make this monumental conversion that includes all SSM hospitals, doctors offices and outpatient facilities, and extends through 2011. When complete, the EHR will be available on more than 13,000 computers at SSM facilities in Wisconsin, Illinois, Missouri and Oklahoma.

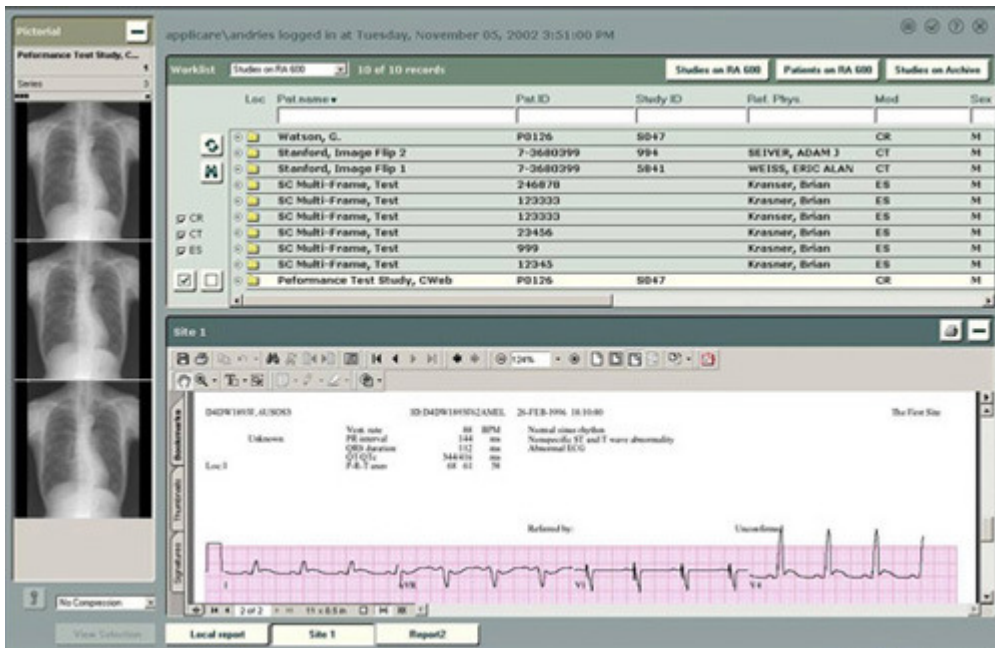
According to a recent study by the Institute of Medicine, one of every seven primary care visits is affected by missing medical information. One goal of this conversion is to place all medical information where it is readily accessible to anyone providing care at any SSM facility.

DePaul patients will also have access to MyChart, an on-line component that offers them secure access to portions of their medical record. If a patient has a question or sees an error in their chart, he or she will be able to email the staff directly. Parents will be able to look at shot records, growth charts and Tylenol dosages without having to call the office.

SSM Health Care is investing an estimated \$330 million in its conversion to EHRs. "The long-term benefits of the electronic health record will be recognized at every level of SSM Health Care, and most importantly, by every patient who visits one of our hospitals," said Tom Langston, SSM Health Care's chief information officer for Project Beacon. "This initiative is critical to the continued success of our mission in the 21st Century."

**EHR Fast Facts:**

- Doctors and nurses will have instant computer access to patient information no matter the caregiver's location, eliminating reliance on paper records and saving precious time.
- The EHR will be secure; meaning only medical personnel involved in treatment can access the information.
- The EHR will automatically cross-check medications against other prescribed drugs, diagnoses and lab results, and suggest possible changes in treatment.
- The EHR will offer enormous savings in the use and cost of paper.



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