

The Future of Health is Here!

Commonwealth Rolls out its New Electronic Medical Record

Commonwealth has gone from thousands of patient charts to just one: an electronic medical record (EMR). The practice went live with the paperless system back in June, gradually adding in its nine office locations and six physical therapy clinics. With the addition of the two outpatient surgery centers by year's end, every Commonwealth location will be on board for a seamless patient care experience.

"This is a huge step forward for our practice," says Commonwealth Chief Operating Officer Maureen Cook. "It has improved efficiency, patient-provider communication, continuity of care and patient safety."

The EMR not only collects all patient information in a single location, it links that data across the enterprise. "Now everything is in one place, regardless of where a patient was seen within the practice," says Bruce Zimmer, MD, who was among those first to go live at Commonwealth's Springfield office in June. "We've got medications, allergies, past history and previous visits in a single chart. We don't have to hunt for charts, or deal with missing charts, or call another office for information. Everything is presented in a uniform manner."

It's also made communication faster and more convenient. Physicians can e-prescribe now and the medication is at the pharmacy when the patient arrives to pick it up. If a patient calls the office with a question, anyone can find the answer on the computer right away.

Safety is enhanced, as well. "The EMR offers consistent, legible documentation," says Daniel Thompson, MD, who sees patients at the Springfield and Alexandria offices. "We're able to verify medications and doses from the pharmacy electronically, and we receive automatic reminders for tests and screenings – there was one for bone density for one of my patients just today."

Patient care is seamless, with physicians able to view the full continuity of care rendered

not only by their Commonwealth peers but by the physician assistants, physical therapists and nurses, as well. Physicians also have faster access to patient information. Once dictated, notes are now in the chart within 24 hours.

Commonwealth selected this technology – from industry leader SRS – because it is the most physician-friendly. "The system required the least amount of workflow change for our physicians," says Carol Carey, SRS Project Manager, who served as the practice's point person during implementation. "It's logical and very easy to use. We've been happily surprised by how "hands-on" our physicians have been with the system."

Though challenging, everybody seems to have embraced the change. "Our patients are impressed – as with most technology, they think it's kind of cool," Dr. Zimmer says. "And as we get more efficient with it there are more things we'll be able to do with it. It's the wave of future and we've made the transition well."



Daniel E. Thompson, MD, earned a BS in Biomechanical Engineering from Stanford University and then earned his medical degree from the University of Mississippi School of Medicine in Jackson. He completed both his general surgery internship and orthopaedic residency at Georgetown University Medical Center.



Bruce S. Zimmer, MD, graduated magna cum laude with a BS from Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, Virginia, and then earned his medical degree from the Medical College of Virginia to complete both his surgical internship and orthopaedic residency.



Carol Carey, SRS Project Manager, has held various positions within Commonwealth Orthopaedics over the past five years. She received her BA in Public Relations and her MS in Information Science, both from the University of Pittsburgh. Prior to Commonwealth, Carol has held various information technology positions at Washington-based consulting firms including Ciber Systems, McDonald Bradley and American Management Systems.



Maureen M. R. Cook, COO of Commonwealth Orthopaedics for the past 5 years, received her BA with Distinction from the University of Virginia and her Masters in Health Administration from Virginia Commonwealth University/Medical College of Virginia. Prior to Commonwealth, Maureen was a Medical Practice Consultant and an Assistant Administrator at Inova Fair Oaks Hospital.

For full biographies and a complete directory of the physicians at Commonwealth Orthopaedics visit our website at www.c-o-r.com.



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