Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Brief

An Electronic Health Record for Wirral

We are writing to let you know that after the successful pilot trial of the Wirral EHR, the Chief Executives of Birkenhead and Wallasey PCT and Bebington & West Wirral PCT have agreed that the implementation of the Wirral Electronic Health Record will be going live in all 61 GP practices in Wirral from Mid February onwards.

The Wirral EHR is a significant step forward for GPs to be able to access patient information from Wirral Hospital Trust and Clatterbridge Centre for Oncology via the web. It is run via NHSnet and has a very high level of security. Health care professionals at Wirral Hospital NHS Trust and Clatterbridge Centre for Oncology NHS Trust will also be able to access the Wirral EHR.

What’s in the EHR?

The Wirral EHR currently provides information about:
- Outpatient Appointments
- Accident & Emergency events
- Surgical Procedures,
- Laboratory results
- Admission events to hospital
- Radiology results
- Breast Cancer information
- Discharge events
- And more.....................

Additional patient information due to be taken from Clatterbridge Centre for Oncology NHS Trust (CCO) as from February 04, and from GPs Clinical systems February 04 – April 04.

The Wirral EHR has been designed to provide a rich summary of patient information across Primary, Secondary and Tertiary settings, to aid Doctors and Healthcare Professionals in delivering patient care.

The Benefits

It will bring real benefits allowing:

1. Increased Patient management and safety - due to extensive birth to death record
2. Reduced duplication of work and orders/requests
3. Improved data quality
4. Joined up working between Primary, Community, Secondary and Tertiary Care will promote better understanding between Clinicians and Healthcare Professionals
5. Improved data analysis – electronic analysis supporting new GP contracts with increased data requirements i.e. heart disease etc


For example:

- In Accident and Emergency department, healthcare professionals using the Wirral EHR will be able to find out if a patient has allergies to penicillin or other drugs and if they have significant health problems like diabetes. All this information could make the difference between immediate and delayed care.

- GPs currently receive patient information from Wirral Hospital Trust via letters. These can take up to 8 to 10 days to be processed and received by the GP. The Wirral EHR will provide this information within 24 hours of processing: a significant improvement.

**Access and Security**

Only appropriately qualified and trained personnel directly involved in patient care will access patient information contained in the EHR. The EHR has a robust security model in place using advanced technology. This module has been specifically designed for the Wirral EHR and there are robust reporting protocols in place to deal with any breaches of confidentiality. This is underpinned by Wirral Hospital Trusts IT security team, which reports to Information Governance and Clinical Governance for the four organisations. The EHR systems administrator can look at the access logs, to see who has been accessing the EHR, at what time, which patient, which record and which health event. This function allows the systems administrator to monitor and audit all staff access. Following on from this security model there are specific access levels. Access levels have been set against specific roles and organisations, permitting staff to only access the necessary information. The security model also has the ability to allow sensitive data to be hidden away; this module will be further developed in line with patient choice and the National programme.

**Consent**

After taking National guidance and local guidance the EHR is being implemented using implied consent. Patients will be informed using a 3-phased campaign, detailed below and will be given the choice to opt out of the Wirral EHR if they so wish. Patients will also have the choice to view their information contained in the EHR, and can apply in the normal way in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

**Patient awareness**

Before we commence with the implementation a patient/public awareness campaign is due to be launched. It will be a phased campaign consisting of:

**Phase 1**

- Posters and patient leaflets in GP practices
• Launch of public website – www.wirralhealth.org.uk/ehr

Phase 2
• Posters and patient leaflets in public places e.g. Libraries, pharmacies, hospitals, clinics, post offices.

Phase 3
• Leaflet drop to every household in Wirral

As you can see this is a comprehensive campaign reaching out to patients and public alike.

**Public consultation**

The Wirral EHR was piloted as part of the NHS Information Authority's Electronic Record Development and Implementation Programme (ERDIP) and Wirral was one of 19 demonstrator sites. During this pilot each demonstrator site had different remits, one focusing on consent and public involvement, Wirral's focus was on Cancer. All the learning experiences were shared between the sites. Also during this project a member of the public attended all the project board meetings.

A local survey “Reviewing Public Perception” involving Primary and Secondary Care was carried out October 2000. Also a National survey “The Public View on Electronic Health Records” by Health Which? for the National Programme for Information Technology (7th October 2003) has engaged public opinion and the results are available at www.nhsia.nhs.uk/confidentiality. This report found that patient reaction was extremely positive, although they need to be informed and reassured about security. Continuing on from this patients will be further engaged through Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) groups in the community during March/April and the Citizens Panel during July/August 04.

**Links to other initiatives**

The next module of the Wirral EHR has been designed to send electronic referrals from GPs to community services; this will reduce problems associated with faxed referrals, such as poor handwriting and faxes sent to wrong addresses. Electronic referrals will channel processes and the EHR will provide the recipient Clinician with all the appropriate patient information. This new module will allow GP to GP messaging and data input into the patient record.

The Wirral EHR will also support the e-booking framework, to allow electronic booking and cater for patient choice.

During the Wirral EHR project a Master Patient Index (MPI) has been built to store all patient demographics, receiving regular updates from the National Exeter system. Wirral is hoping that the MPI can be used to share data as part of Single Assessment Process (SAP) on Wirral.
Wirral’s Vision

Wirral’s ideals for an Electronic Health Record have been founded by “Information for Health - Delivering IT in the 21st Century” Department of Health, 1997: and is ahead of the NHS’s national IT programme which aims to produce a National Care Record Service by 2010. However, Wirral is maintaining close links with the National programme gaining advice and support during all stages of development and implementation.

The overall vision is to implement the Wirral EHR into Primary, Community, Secondary and Tertiary Care services settings across Wirral. Ultimately the Wirral EHR will be a tool for accessing patient information more readily, for reducing duplications and errors, improving administration and aiding Clinicians and Healthcare Professionals in improving patient care.

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