

Odd Fellows on the Cutting Edge

BY SUSAN CORNELL
SPECIAL TO THE TIMES

"EMR" is more than a buzz word these days. It's here, at Fairview Odd Fellows Home of Connecticut, the region's only non-profit nursing home.

Fairview has just implemented the first phase of an electronic medical records system. CNAs and nurses can now use a touch-screen pad to document resident care such as ambulation, dressing, bathing, meal consumption, and skin care—information which was previously handwritten. All of this data is transferred to the main computer to formalize each resident's care plan.

"We were looking to combine our financial information with our clinical information, so that it is all stored electronically and then can be easily seen by others when the system is totally integrated," explains administrator James Malloy. "For instance, when we send a patient over to the hospital, the record then could follow them to the hospital. The other side of it is the documentation. Because it is electronic, there are parameters that you have to look at before you enter the information, the information becomes more consistent and it also prevents errors."

The first step entailed computerizing Fairview's pharmacy services. "In doing that, the chances of drug errors are far less," says Malloy.

Deb Morgan, RN, director of nursing services as well as one of the project coordinators, finds that EMR "makes the information more concise."

Morgan explains, "The licensed staff is directed to a diagnosis-specific progress note that you're writing and, throughout that diagnosis-specific progress note, it's going to take you to all of the areas you are going to want to document on."

This means the user is less apt to include extraneous information and can "really drill it down to the important clinical things that are going on with the patient."

Progress notes written by nurses can be viewed with a quick look, and

alerts that are coming up on patients can be easily noted.

The ultimate goal of EMR is to be able to spend more time with patients.

"Even in the very early stages we're in I can see that is going to happen. Certainly there's a learning curve as everybody adjusts to the records, but certainly I can see that we're going to get there," she said.

According to Malloy, Fairview is "pretty far ahead of everybody else. I don't think anybody in the area has a totally integrated system."

Director of Development David Brown noted that several hospitals and doctors have implemented electronic medical records, but not many nursing homes.

"We're being proactive about this and have been planning for this for quite some time. We eventually got some monies to do this," he said.

Fairview received a \$50,000 grant from the State of Connecticut, and a \$53,000 legacy was given to upgrade the computer system. A donation from the Odd Fellows Grand Lodge of Connecticut in the amount of \$12,750 "kicked off the technology fund," said Brown.

According to Malloy, "[Fairview is] the only one that has a system that is compliant with the federal standard that allows our system to talk to whatever system the hospital has."

He added, "The federal government has set up regulations that say the new EMR systems should be able to communicate with one another. What we've purchased is not a standalone operation. When this is fully implemented and the hospital has its system fully implemented, they will be able to communicate with each other."

Morgan has found the staff to be completely supportive of the EMR project.

"This is very new technology and both the licensed staff and the certified nursing assistants have really taken very well to the program," she said. "It's certainly a continuing education thing, but it really has very exciting for them."

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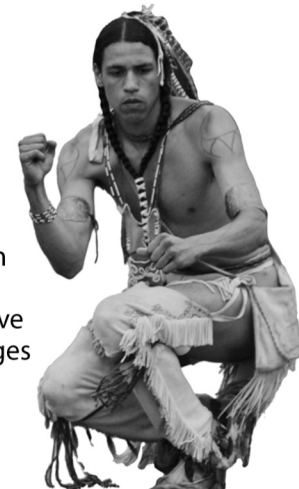


Pequot Museum Events

Saturday, March 28, 2 pm

SPECIAL PREVIEW: *We Shall Remain: After the Mayflower*

A special preview screening of *After the Mayflower*, part of the award-winning American Experience series, *We Shall Remain*, from PBS and WGBH. The series airs on PBS stations across the country starting on April 13, but see it here first! Sharon Grimberg, executive producer for the *We Shall Remain* series, introduces the film. For ages 12 and older. Admission to the screening is free.



Wednesday, April 1, 3:30-5:30 pm

The Exiles

Selected for the 2008 Berlin International Film Festival, *The Exiles* (1961) chronicles a day in the life of a group of 20-something Native Americans who left reservation life in the 1950s to live in the Bunker Hill district of Los Angeles, CA. Following the film, John Cutnose (Cheyenne/Lakota) speaks about his experiences as an Indian living in the L.A. area and answers audience questions. For ages 13 and older. Free with Museum admission, free to Museum members. Student rates for Museum admission are available with student ID.

Friday, April 3, 12:30 pm

Saturday, April 4, 1:30 pm

Hawk Henries, Native Music and Musical Instruments

Hawk Henries (Nipmuc) performs on a variety of instruments - flutes he made, plus the didgeridoo and mbira - interspersed with anecdotal and personal stories. Hawk encourages the audience to share their thoughts and questions. Free with Museum admission, free to Museum members. This event is made possible by a grant from the Connecticut Light and Power Company.



Wed-Sat, 10am to 4pm, last admission 3pm

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