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PRESS RELEASE

OC Health Care Agency Implements Secure Electronic Patient History Sharing System that is First-of-its-Kind in the Nation

Innovation Recognized by the Journal of Emergency Medical Services

(Santa Ana, CA) – The OC Health Care Agency’s (HCA) field implementation of an electronic system that enables the instantaneous sharing of a patient’s medical history from ambulance to hospital has been recognized this month by the Journal of Emergency Medical Services for its innovation.

HCA’s Emergency Medical Services (EMS) division became the first in the nation to fully launch the Search, Alert, File, Reconcile (SAFR) model of health information exchange in February of this year.

“This system enables emergency medical technicians and paramedics here in Orange County to immediately access a patient’s past medical history when evaluating and treating in the field, including information like recent hospitalizations, past medical history, medications, allergies, preferred healthcare facilities and end-of-life decisions, which can affect initial care decisions and long-term outcomes,” said Dr. Samuel Stratton, EMS Medical Director.

An alert is then created that notifies the receiving hospital of the incoming patient and provides attending medical staff there with important information including age, gender, arrival time(s), vitals and any procedures performed in route, saving time and freeing staff to focus on what matters – patient care instead of paperwork.

EMS responders are mandated by California regulations and local policy to complete a Patient Care Report (PCR) whenever they make contact with a patient to document incident demographics, assessments, and treatments. Historically, the PCR was completed on a paper form and a carbon copy was hand delivered to the receiving hospital emergency department. While the paper PCR included a significant amount of information relevant to emergency patient assessments and care, it was often illegible and it was nearly impossible to extract data for prospective or retrospective analysis of the quality of patient care.

“This new program helps the sharing of secure access of a patient’s health information, from dispatch of EMS to on-scene care, transporting of patients to the emergency department, admitting them to the hospital, discharging the patient, and reporting of the patient’s outcome back to the EMS provider for data review,” Dr. Stratton said. “It’s improving the quality of care at all levels.”

To read the “Armed with History” article from the May edition of the Journal of Emergency Medical Services, please click [here](#).

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