



## New ED System Improves Hospital-Physician Communication

*A new computer system installed at Our Lady of Lourdes Medical Center and Lourdes Medical Center of Burlington County is giving referring physicians complete, timely reports on treatments their patients received in the emergency departments of the two hospitals.*

The Wellsoft Corp. Emergency Department Information System (EDIS) also improves patient flow through the ER and reduces the amount of time individuals wait for treatment.

"It's important for the family practice and internal medicine docs to know what's going on with their patients," said **Lawrence Segal, D.O.**, Chief of Emergency Medicine at Lourdes Medical Center of Burlington County. "If one of their patients came through a Lourdes ED, the system will fax to them a detailed report."

### Clear Communication

In 2006, Our Lady of Lourdes Medical Center saw 42,921 ER visits and Lourdes Medical Center of Burlington County 33,765. Prior to the system's implementation at the two hospitals in the fall, referring physicians were not routinely notified of their patients' visits and patients sometimes forgot discharge instructions.

"We had a rudimentary patient tracking system with the inability to interact with outside family practice offices. It worked for a while, but the trend is moving toward electronic medical records," Dr. Segal said. "We were anxious to incorporate this trend so we could be ahead of the curve."

The Wellsoft system records how a patient presents, including the complaint, vital signs, medications taken and allergies; treatment, including physical exam results and notes by the attending physician and nurses, lab results and radiologic scan reports; and outcome, including whether the patient was admitted to the hospital, medications taken or prescribed and follow-up instructions. The system generates prescriptions that includes physician-specific information and required license/DEA numbers.

Finished treatment reports are faxed to primary physicians in batches every 15 minutes.

"The Wellsoft system gives the primary care physicians a complete picture of what happened in the patient's ED visit with us," said **Maureen Hetu**, Lourdes Health System Chief Information Officer.

Dr. Segal said the computer-generated reports resolve another problem vexing to many physicians. "Everyone can read our reports now. There is no dispute with our handwriting," he said.

### Triage and Tracking

Dynamic, color-coded patient tracking shows the status of the emergency department. At a glance, staff can see how long each patient has been waiting and for what, such as initial triage or lab results.

"It allows us to see if a bottleneck has occurred in a certain area and the ability to fix the problem," Hetu said. "We also want to reduce the number of people who leave the ER without receiving treatment."

The system has many features designed to save time for both the physician and patient, including:

- Quick registration for timely order of tests;
- Physician-order entry of tests and prescriptions;
- Integration with Lourdes' Picture Archive Communication System (PACS) so radiologists read ER orders first;
- Integration with Admissions Department for streamlined bed assignment;
- Easy-to-use templates and ability to cut and paste from previous records.

### Removing Barriers

Improved ER efficiencies realized through Wellsoft have contributed to higher patient satisfaction scores at both Lourdes hospitals.

"The patients came to see a doctor. We're trying to remove the barriers, to make their visit easier," Dr. Segal said. "This system helps us do that."

**Scott Dorfner, D.O.**, an Internal Medicine specialist affiliated with Lourdes Medical Center of Burlington County, said the new system vastly improves communications with referring physicians.

"You receive information the patient has been in the ER, copies of evaluations, consults, all labs and studies. You don't have to go hunting for them," Dr. Dorfner said. "It also helps me know who needs to be seen for follow-up."

### Contact

For inclusion on the ER automatic fax list at Our Lady of Lourdes Medical Center or Lourdes Medical Center of Burlington County, call the Physician Support Pager at 856-223-2245 or Maureen Hetu, Chief Information Officer, at 856-580-6332.