

PRESS RELEASE

FSU's Clinical Learning Center Pioneers the Use of Electronic Medical Records

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TALLAHASSEE, Fla., --The Clinical Learning Center at the Florida State University College of Medicine is pioneering the use of electronic medical records in the training of medical students in a simulated clinical setting.

College of Medicine Dean Joseph Scherger said that the electronic medical record system is a key part of a much larger commitment the college has made to integrating medical information technology into the curriculum at FSU.

"Information technology is a major emphasis of the medical education program at FSU, not simply because it increases doctors' efficiency, but because it can help prevent medical errors and improve the quality of patient care," Scherger said.

A June 10 special report in the Wall Street Journal titled "Health Care Goes Digital" leads off with the statement that "The health-care industry finally has little choice: It has to get wired."

"A number of factors, including mounting evidence that information technology helps hospitals save lives, have come together to make hanging back no longer an option for doctors and hospitals," wrote Wall Street Journal assistant managing editor Laura Landro.

While about 80 percent of medical schools nationwide train students in simulated clinics where actors portray patients, the Clinical Learning Center at FSU is the first to deploy a system that enables students to enter and retrieve patient information using an electronic medical record system.

The system, called Practice Partner, is a product of Physician Micro Systems Inc., a leading medical software company based in Seattle.

"We are teaching students from day one how to practice medicine using the best information technology available," said Nancy Clark, director of medical informatics education at FSU. "This includes not only electronic medical records, but also handheld and laptop computers and the use of Internet-based and other electronic resources in clinical decision-making."

Along with medical information technology, the Clinical Learning Center focuses on teaching patient communication skills, or what some people call "bedside manner," said Sarah Sherraden, the center's director. "The overriding goal of all the courses that use the Clinical Learning Center is to instill not only the science, but also the art of medicine in our students," Sherraden said. "By teaching students in a controlled environment and recording their patient encounters on digital video, we can give them important feedback on how to talk to a patient and develop a partnership with the patient that is focused on the patient's overall well-being."