



November 29, 2009

LETTERS

Electronic Medical Records

To the Editor:

Re [“Little Benefit Seen, So Far, in Electronic Patient Records”](#) (Business Day, Nov. 16):

Your article about electronic medical records, a cornerstone of proposed health care reform plans, suggests that the use of computerized records in hospitals has little impact on cost and quality of care.

Electronic records by themselves may not have an immediate effect on cost and safety — but clinical decision support systems do.

A comprehensive decision support system doesn't simply digitize a paper chart — it monitors a patient's vitals, detects potential problems, issues alerts and reminders to clinicians, and generally performs as a safety net system, all of which have an enormous impact on patient safety and significantly reduce malpractice claims. One hospital using our system for obstetrics cut its paid claims by \$5 million a year.

Simply punching information into a computer may not do much for patients, but using electronic records as part of a more comprehensive solution, which includes the use of clinical decision support and advanced analytics, can reduce errors and drive a cycle of continuous improvement. It is the comprehensive solution, not the records themselves, that is proven to save lives and slash costs.

Dan O'Keeffe

Chief Medical Officer, PeriGen

Princeton, N.J., Nov. 19, 2009