

Headwaters joins other hospitals in unified approach to electronic medical records management

By Paula Brown

Headwaters Health Care Centre (HHCC) has reached a milestone in its management of electronic medical records.

The local hospital announced in a press release on Sept. 18, that they had attained 'Stage 6' of the Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society (HIMSS) Electronic Medical Record Adoption Model (EMRAM).

The achievement is for the CARE4 Health Information System (HIS), which Headwaters created in 2021 in partnership with three other hospitals - Royal Victoria Regional Health Centre, Collingwood General and Marine Hospital and Georgian Bay General Hospital.

'Prior to our partnership, each hospital had its own unique processes, technologies and environment,' explained Dave Brewin, Regional Chief Information Officer. 'Creating a unified approach to EMR adoption required not only technical integration, but also a cultural shift towards clinical standards and processes.'

EMRAM is an eight-stage model that measures the use and utilization of electronic medical records within hospitals.

Institutions that obtain Stage 6 in the model are considered to have robust capabilities for clinical decision support, a highly secure health information exchange, and a level of emergency medical record integration that enables improved safety, quality and efficiency in healthcare delivery.

In order to reach the milestone, the four partnered hospitals were required to meet rigorous standards set by HIMSS including digital health strategies, operational goals aligned and clinical workflows, data entry processes, and decision-making protocols standardized to ensure consistency and reliability.

Headwaters described reaching Stage 6 of the model as 'a monumental achievement,' as less than a dozen hospitals in Canada have earned it.

'Achieving EMRAM Stage 6 is a remarkable milestone that underscores the dedication of our front-line clinical staff and our success in working together. This achievement wasn't reached in isolation - it was the result of a strong partnership between hospitals committed to advancing digital health care,' said Dr. Sanjeev Singwi, chief medical information officer for HHCC. 'By collaborating and sharing insights, we've strengthened our digital workflows, and elevated the safety and standard of care for our patients. Together, we're shaping the future of health care.'

For patients of Headwaters, the certification comes with the aim of creating a better hospital experience with more accessibility to personal medical information for patients and their care providers as well as streamlining data for more personalized care delivery.