

## Making Strides In Our Hospital's Plan To Go "Paperless"

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Over the next few years, the Pembroke Regional Hospital will be making strides in its plan to go "paperless" with the implementation of a new electronic medical record system.

"PRH has identified Digital Transformation as a key strategic initiative which will include this next major step," said PRH President and CEO Sabine Mersmann. "While there is still a lot of advance planning work to be done including costing and identifying the source of funds for such a large investment, we are excited about the many benefits that this will bring for our patients and health care providers."

In recent years, the digitization of health care has resulted in numerous tools and resources that improve healthcare services, including software that makes health information more accessible to patients, and keeps patient data secure in one place.

At PRH, some of the work done to date includes transition from paper-based to digital physician reports which can be electronically transferred in a timely manner to family doctors. This enables a faster review of the results and any necessary follow up.

Pembroke Regional Hospital also submits inpatient reports, surgical reports, diagnostic imaging and emergency department patient documentation to a provincial electronic medical record called *Connecting Ontario* and *Ontario MD*.

The *Connecting Ontario Clinical Viewer* is a secure, web-based portal that provides care providers all over Ontario, real-time 24/7 access to digital health records including; dispensed medications, laboratory results, hospital visits, Home and Community Care Services, mental health care information, diagnostic imaging reports and images. This provides a comprehensive view of a patient's health journey regardless of where in the province the information was obtained and enables health care providers to make faster, more informed care decisions.

Our hospital has also been exploring other opportunities to ensure that patients can have access to their digital results in a timely manner. In the coming months, this will include the adoption of the *PocketHealth* platform.

*PocketHealth* is a secure, online storage hub for medical imaging records such as X-Rays, Ultrasounds, CT scans and MRIs which, for a small fee, can be easily accessed from any personal device. Once an individual signs up for *PocketHealth*, their images and reports appear in their account the moment they are ready. This enables patients to be better informed about their diagnosis and health status so that they are better prepared for conversations with their health care team. More details on the adoption of this platform will be shared later this spring.

Many patients have asked us about the availability of *MyChart*, particularly those who have had the opportunity to use this service at other hospitals. *MyChart* is another personalized, secure online tool that allows you to view your health information.

Although PRH does not currently have the ability to provide a service like *MyChart*, the work we are doing in lead up to implementation of a new electronic medical record system will help lay the groundwork for offering a service of this type in the future.

In the meantime, patients who would like a copy of their medical information can easily request this through our Release of Information Office. Most requests are filled and ready for pickup within five business days or less (inpatients receive their requested information before they go home) and the service is free of charge unless the file is over 100 pages or the information needed to be couriered. Personal health information cannot be emailed as the system is not encrypted.

Most recently, as part of our organization-wide strategy to digitize processes, the Pembroke Regional Hospital has introduced a new electronic Lab order entry and information system which, together, have eliminated the use of paper for lab orders and results.

“As a hospital, we recognize the benefits of digital evolution and we are committed to the work it’s going to take to move us forward. In the end, every investment we make will result in more timely access and better care for those in our region,” Mrs. Mersmann said.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:**

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