

1998 Davies Winner

Kaiser-Permanente Northwest

Portland, OR

Homer Chin, M.D., Marlene Brannon; Larry Dworkin, M. D.; Michael Krall, M.D., Peggy McClure; Nan Robertson, R.Ph.; Paul Wallace, M/D.; Debra W. Weiss

Kaiser Permanente Northwest's (KPNW) comprehensive clinical information is a CPR that also automates many of the information transmission processes related to outpatient care. With KPNW's CPR over 700 physicians, representing more than 20 medical and surgical specialties, as well as 2,600 support staff in 27 geographically separate sites, deliver health care to more than 400,000 members. Dr. Chin described the four components of the CPR; a homegrown Results Reporting System (RRS), the CPR (EpicCare), Internet/Intranet (access to external resources such as Medline and to guidelines/protocols, practice resources, etc.) and disease and immunization registries. Rollout of EpicCare occurred in 1994-1995 to primary care physicians and during 1996-1997 to specialist physicians and practices.

Dr. Krall described the information accessible through RRS and physician use of EpicCare to capture orders, documentation, and narrative notes. Most data entry is via keyboard. Multiple utilities such as "smart-set" orders and charting templates facilitate entry and embed guidelines to make it easy for physicians to do the right thing. The implementation has not included exam room terminals, primary because of cost, although KPNW is currently piloting the use of hand-held, wireless devices.

KPNW has surveyed its physicians several times. At six months, 90 percent reported that they would prefer not to return to the paper chart, despite increased time spent in documentation. Nan Robertson described the many impacts on efficiency and quality of care that have been documented. These include reduced chart pulls, decreased redundant test orders, improved adherence to guidelines for prevention, health maintenance, pharmacy ordering, and disease management (diabetes control).