

**BRIGHT LIGHTS AWARD**

  
2013

**Meaningful Use of Electronic Medical Records  
Award Winner - Queen's Family Health Team**

**Using OSCAR well to improve patient care**



Queen's Family Health Team moved to electronic medical records in 2006, and has been using the open-source OSCAR program since 2010. Just as important as the software is the team's understanding that a shared patient chart demands commitment and cooperation to ensure it is current and complete. When charts are properly maintained, they can be used both for improving an individual's care and to evaluate trends and develop policies that will benefit all patients served by the team.

The Queen's team has made changes to the program to make it more useful — one was to develop a nursing intake form that prompts nurses to do medication reconciliation, take vitals, ask about smoking, alcohol and exercise and recommend any preventive care that's due. But the design of the form also allows the data to be collected into quantifiable meta data. The team can track former smokers, or current smokers by whether they have asthma or diabetes. Another programming change allows the team to review patients by indicators such as last visit, number of visits per year, BMI, smoking status, disease registries, blood pressure, age or gender. The biggest effort has been to improve the system's ability to manage prescriptions, with a goal of improving medication reconciliation and promote safer prescribing.

The Queen's Family Health Team is working toward giving patients access to the EMR, to book their own appointments, check information and help maintain it. However, since concerns over privacy hampered the development of electronic medical records, the Queen's team is vigilant when it comes to errors in the records or breaches of privacy. Special critical incident reporting rounds are held to discuss errors, while all staff must sign a privacy contract once a year. Spot audits monitor unwarranted access to patient charts.

As an open-source program, OSCAR is continually evolving, and Queen's team has worked with others in the city and around the province on finding effective uses for it.