

JENNIFER LANGHAM
freelance business writing

Public Relations Article
Spartanburg Regional: A Leader in Healthcare Technology

“Twenty years ago when I entered the healthcare industry, technology really was not used for patient care,” said Ray Shingler, SRHS Vice President for Technology.

What a difference 20 years makes.

Now, from electronic patient records to systems for writing prescriptions on the computer, hospitals throughout the country use technology to improve the efficiency, safety, and quality of care for patients. And Spartanburg Regional Healthcare System, ranked in an independent study by PricewaterhouseCoopers in the top 5% of hospitals using technology, is a leader among these hospitals.

In fact, Spartanburg Regional hosts over 60 visits a year from national and international hospital representatives who come to see Regional’s innovative technology.

What do they come to see? Systems that integrate patient care and nurses and physicians who appreciate the tools that help them do their jobs.

Centralizing Medical Information

A patient on any of Spartanburg Regional’s hospital floors will see nurses charting information through a bedside documentation system on laptop computers. Nicknamed “Cows”--Computers on Wheels--by hospital staff, these laptops are one part of the hospital’s comprehensive electronic medical records system.

Laura Henderson, R.N., BSN, who works on the coronary care unit, says that technology has made a significant difference in how quickly and easily multiple care providers can see patient information. “Some of my patients have seven different doctors,” she said. “The doctors can all pull up the patient’s medical information on their computers, while the nurse can be charting new information at the same time.”

In addition to information being entered by nurses, monitors are hooked directly to the electronic medical records system so that patient information, such as heart rate, can be downloaded directly to the patient’s record. At other hospitals, nurses have to key out information from the monitors, write it down on paper, then enter it manually into their computer system.

All this clinical information is made even more user friendly through Spartanburg Regional’s physician portal, a secure web site where physicians can access patient

information from their offices, their homes, and from computers throughout the hospital complex.

Laura Henderson says that the ease of access to patient information clearly helps in patient care. She said, "I think this technology cuts down on how long these patients have to wait before an accurate diagnosis is made, which is very positive."

[Excerpt]