

## Integris Health Edmond opens with electronic environment

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Dr. K.J. Little, medical director of Integris Edmond's emergency department. (Maik Sabolich)

EDMOND – Starting another workweek held a different meaning Monday for about 150 employees in Edmond.

They are the staff of the new Integris Health Edmond hospital, which officially opened its doors at 7 a.m. By midafternoon, they had performed three surgeries, had one emergency department visit and saw a handful of rehabilitation patients. No doubt the patient load will increase, but Monday was a day to acclimate to new surroundings and technology, including new ways for doctors to give their orders.

“You can practice all you want, but until you get that patient in there and start entering orders and following up on radiology and finishing your notes and getting them admitted ... that was my

biggest fear,” said Dr. K.J. Little, medical director of the hospital's emergency department. “We're all trained to take good care of the patient, so that's usually not an issue, but it's documenting it correctly.”

Avilla Williams, president of Integris Health Edmond, said the hospital opened as an electronic environment – in addition to an electronic medical record, the doctors are using a computerized physician order entry. It marks a new way of operating for many doctors who are accustomed to writing out or dictating their orders.

“We're trying to get away from that paper chart – they're entering their orders into the computer,” she said. “For the last month, we've had our staff in training. The staff is skilled in the clinical care; it's more about how we interact with that computerized environment.”

Physicians seeking hospital privileges at Integris Health Edmond (about 200 so far) had to undergo training on the new computerized system. The training was first Web-based, then on-site, followed by practice time.

“There used be a time when hospitals were a little reluctant to do that because doctors might say, ‘I'll just go somewhere else where you're not doing it,’ but with our new national endeavors, there's no place to go. You might as well go ahead and learn it, and most of them are rallying to it.”

Doctors put their own orders into the new electronic order form, which eliminates a third party and should decrease the possibility of errors, Williams said. Doctors also can access the system from home to input orders.

Integris' information technology staff, as well as representatives from equipment vendors, will be on hand for a few weeks to make sure the new staff gets acclimated to the technology, Williams said.

The staff at the attached rehabilitation clinic, which carries the Jim Thorpe name, also is enjoying new equipment. Scott Anthony, director of outpatient rehabilitation, said breaking in new technology is a treat. Being located on a hospital campus also is advantageous, and not just for the physical proximity, he said.

“Being hospital-based means that we follow a different set of rules with insurance,” Anthony

said. "With Medicare, for example, nonhospital-based clinics are held to a capitated amount for outpatient services, whereas we fall under a hospital, so we are not held to that same (cap). So people can come here after they've had a stroke or major car accident and they can receive a full amount of care appropriate to their needs without having to worry about a limit on their visits."

Integrus Health has 40 beds but was built with room to grow. Williams said she believes such smaller, community-based hospitals will be important for health care's future. So is being part of a system like Integrus that has resources at hand.

"I would not want to be a small hospital trying to do it on my own," Williams said. "I think you'll see more community hospitals going forth and fewer tertiary hospitals because some of that high-level expertise can be done in those kind of hospitals, like a Baptist or an OU. You'll see the community hospitals taking care of other things and feeding patients to them. I think that's where health care is going, and if we're looking at how we're going to reduce costs of the delivery of health care, we can't continue to replicate the same things."

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