

Everyday Affairs

Protecting privacy, saving lives

Last September, Fallon Community Health Plan (FCHP), Fallon Clinic and UMass Memorial Health Care were awarded a \$1.4 million grant from the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality and the National Institutes of Health to connect communities electronically to enhance care.

The three entities have entered into a long-term partnership to develop both a regional health information organization, called *Central Massachusetts Health Information Organization*, and the technology to support the secure exchange of health information.

The project, known as SAFE Health (Secure Architecture for Exchanging Health Information) will provide physicians with secure Web-based access to patients' medical records at the point of care. To date, the proof of concept is complete and a pilot is expected to be ready for launch this fall. You'll hear more about it in the coming months.

As you know, patient charts are still in the pre-electronic dark ages, residing largely on paper. SAFE Health hopes to change that locally by enabling patient information to flow between FCHP, Fallon Clinic and UMass, following patients as they traverse the health care system.

The sites will store their own patient/member data until it needs to be transmitted to where a member is receiving care. An unconscious person brought into an emergency room will be treated in a safer and more efficient manner, as the SAFE Health portal would supply the patient's medical history.

To learn more about this exciting project, please go to www.safehealth.org.