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Enhancing transcription services in Prairie North

High quality care depends, in part, on physicians and other providers having the right information at the right time so they can make the best possible decisions when treating patients.

Thanks to new technologies that were successfully rolled out in Prairie North Health Region, medical reports and studies will be more accurate and available for distribution in less time. It all adds up to better patient care.

“Everyone who was a part of this transformation, including our Prairie North colleagues, worked very hard to make this implementation a success,” said Kendell Arndt, project sponsor. “I’m proud of how the teams worked together to put in place voice recognition technologies that are much better for patients and providers alike.”

Two big successes

Fluency for Transcription is one of two technologies that were implemented in the region. The technology supports acute care dictation and transcription work. Physicians began using the new system to record their dictations on May 9.

Dr. M. L. Bushidi, who works as an internist at Battlefords Union Hospital said, “The new system is very good and user-friendly. I like the new format.”

But the most significant effect, he says, is enhanced patient care.

“The system provides faster turnaround times, reducing delays in receiving up-to-date reports,” said Dr. Bushidi.

For transcriptionists, the new system means a better and more efficient way to work.

Angela Hotchkiss, a medical transcriptionist at Lloydminster Hospital said, “The new voice recognition system is absolutely fabulous! It’s efficient, quick and easy-to-use. Everything we need to do our jobs is in one system – no more going back and forth between different websites to find information.”

With Fluency for Transcription, physicians and other care providers create electronic audio files of their dictations. Every time someone dictates, the technology “learns” that person’s speech patterns and the accuracy of dictations improves.

Using Fluency for Transcription, those employees who perform acute care transcription work listen to recordings and type up the appropriate medical reports. Over time as the system gets more accurate

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at capturing dictations, employees who transcribe will listen to the playback and check it against text files displayed on screen. Edits made at that point help improve the accuracy of the system.

The other technology that was successfully rolled out in the region is called Fluency Voice Workstation, which supports medical laboratory dictation and transcription work. The technology was rolled out as a short-term fix in order to move the region off their old system that is no longer supported and was at risk of failure. The long-term plan is still to move medical laboratory transcription services in Prairie North onto the provincial Fluency Direct front-end voice recognition system. That work is scheduled to happen in September 2016.

One significant challenge

While both implementations in acute care and medical laboratory services went smoothly, a few technical challenges were experienced in rolling out Fluency Voice Workstation to support medical imaging dictation and transcription work. The most notable challenge teams encountered was that it was taking too long for a dictated report to show up in the system for processing. A decision was made to temporarily revert to the legacy system the region had been using while teams look into resolving the issue with Fluency Voice Workstation.