We never go out of style!   How to create a style guide for electronic medical records (eMR).

INTRODUCTION

Trinity Health is one of the largest multi-institutional Catholic health care delivery systems in the nation. It serves people and communities in 21 states from coast to coast with 88 hospitals, and 126 continuing care facilities, home health and hospice programs, and PACE center locations that provide more than 2.5 million visits annually. The organization was formed in May 2013, when Trinity Health and Catholic Health East officially came together to strengthen their shared mission, increase excellence in care and advance transformative efforts with our unified voice.

With the expansion of the Trinity Health organization, there was also the addition of multiple electronic medical records (eMRs). The clinical leadership recognized the need to develop processes to both design the eMRs in a way to support clinical practice and initiatives but to also migrate to a single approach for that design. The long term goal is to develop a Trinity Health Model eMR that would be implemented across 51 of the Trinity Health hospitals.

PROCESS

Our journey started with the idea that a style guide would assist us in maintaining the standards that we thought would be essential. Although the need to develop a style guide is noted in many references for optimizing the eMR, when it was time to develop the guide there were few to be found and those that were found were so specific to the eMR vendor that they were not valuable. Trinity Health clinical and nursing informatics colleagues collaborated using their informatics knowledge, a review of the clinical practice standards and their past experiences in eMR development.

RESULTS

The document developed represents the Trinity Health System style guideline for the electronic medical record. The concepts within this style guide are intended to promote excellence in clinical practice by the incorporation of evidenced based content and consistency in the definition of clinical terminology, system design, and work flow within the Trinity Health eMR. The scope of this guide is focused on nursing and clinical support professionals that document in the eMR.