IRELAND’S MATERNITY SERVICES WELCOMES THE FIRST BABIES BORN WITH AN ELECTRONIC HEALTH RECORD

BABY EMILY LEADS THE WAY

THE HSE and eHealth Ireland were delighted to announce the arrival of Emily, one of Ireland’s first newborns to have their own electronic health record from birth. Weighing 7lb 5oz, Emily, daughter of Ellen Shine and Aidan Cotter from Cork, arrived in Cork University Maternity Hospital in December.

This marks the introduction of Ireland’s Maternal and Newborn Clinical Management System (Mn-CMS) which will see the implementation of an electronic health record (EHR) for all women and babies in maternity services in Ireland. This allows the clinical record information to be shared with relevant providers of care, as and when required.

While the system went live in Cork Maternity Hospital, plans are in place to roll out the system across the country with the next implementation due to take place at University Hospital Kerry followed by The Rotunda Hospital and the National Maternity Hospital.

The introduction of this new system in Ireland also marks the introduction of the first national electronic patient chart for maternity anywhere in the world. This means that every maternity hospital in one country will be using the same electronic chart with standardisation of the information flow and collection with very obvious advantages for the patient and carers.

Welcoming the systems ‘go live’ Minister for Health Simon Harris said, “The introduction of an electronic health record for mothers and babies in Cork this weekend marks a very significant advance in our national journey towards a digital health system.

“It is also a sign of our commitment to improve maternity services and to implement the National Maternity Strategy. Additional investment funding provided for maternity services in recent years has supported the development of the new system, which the Strategy recommended should be implemented as a priority.

“I compliment the clinicians, local management and the eHealth Ireland team involved and I look forward to the further roll-out of electronic records for all patients in the immediate years ahead. This will support better, safer clinical decision-making and a more connected health service delivering improved health outcomes. For our patients to be empowered and to experience a patient-centred service then the health system will need to weave a digital fabric that supports health and wellbeing and improves the quality and safety of care as well as provision of integrated care.”

Professor Richard Greene, Consultant Obstetrician, Cork University Maternity Hospital and Mn-CMS Joint National Clinical Lead for Obstetrics, said, “This new clinical management system means that patients will have an electronic record instead of a paper record, which will enhance patient care. The system includes maternity early warning scores (iMEWS) and a sepsis early warning scoring system, eprescribing and order communication tools for mother and baby patient care. Neonatal ICU has its first digital support solution to capturing of key information. This ‘go live’ is a result of the dedication and teamwork of many staff within maternity services nationally.”

Richard Corbridge, HSE’s Chief Information Officer and Chief Officer of eHealth Ireland, explained: “All babies from birth will now have their own digital health record. The Mn-CMS is one of the strategic programmes within eHealth Ireland and its implementation will help to build a better healthcare service for mothers and babies.”

**DIGITAL-ENABLED PRESCRIBING GOES LIVE IN THE SOUTH**

**MEDICAL Card patients of 20 GPs in the South can now leave the surgeries with a new-look prescription as digital-enabled prescribing went live just before Christmas. Patients can have also their script fulfilled in three pharmacies who are participating in this initiative at present.**

This new prescription will have a ‘bar code’ as well as a list of prescription items for the patient. It is now a single document and not the previous multipart document, which had to be printed on old dot matrix printers in the GP surgery. This new process will not only save time but is also good for the environment by not printing multi-part documents.

When the patient goes to the participating pharmacy, the pharmacist will use bar code scanning equipment to scan the script. This provides confirmation that the script has not been amended in any way. The script is dispensed as normal to the patient. This new system also enables the reimbursement process to be more streamlined. Previously the hard copy paperwork from the multipart form had to be returned to PCRS but now the copy can be communicated digitally.

Richard Corbridge, Chief Information Officer for the HSE and Chief Officer of eHealth Ireland said, “By digitally enabling prescribing in the community, we are taking the first step in the ePrescribing journey. This fits with the strategic thinking outlined by eHealth Ireland. We hope to extend the number of providers that can use this digital prescribing functionality early in 2017. Already we have more than 400 scripts issued digitally with about half of these already dispensed.”
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The system has been specifically tailored for the Irish healthcare system with clinicians completing a full clinical validation of the design and build of the MN-CMS.

The record of both mother and baby can now be shared where appropriate throughout the maternity care pathway.

The HSE and members of the MN-CMS National Project Team recently took on a 24 hour ‘Digital Challenge’ by visiting maternity units countrywide to mark the launch of this new healthcare initiative. As part of the roll-out of Ireland’s ground-breaking MN-CMS, each of the country’s 19 maternity units have identified a ‘digital gap’ to be remedied ahead of the system implementation.

“Technical issues such as Wi-Fi and network capability, the provision of laptop carts, printers and scanners, and resources or digital training for staff identified in the report, and provided to Minister Harris this evening, will all be addressed within 24 hours of the hospital visit,” said Richard Corbridge.

“Our 24 hour digital challenge illustrates the significance of the Maternal and Newborn Clinical Management System; essentially that everything possible is being done in our maternity units to get them ready for electronic health records, which is one of the largest and most important ICT projects ever undertaken in Irish healthcare.”

The ‘digital challenge’ kicked off at Letterkenny General Hospital early this morning where Richard and members of the MN-CMS National Project Team visited the maternity unit to brief staff on the MN-CMS project, its benefits to patients and staff, and to discuss how the implementation will impact on staff and procedures. The promise to fix one ‘digital’ issue in each hospital within 24 hours following the site visit was also agreed. “This is the single most important development for improved care in Irish maternity services. The MN-CMS allows immediate access to a complete clinical history, 24-hours a day, including results of medical investigations. It ensures that ongoing patient care is based on the most up to date, comprehensive, accurate information”, Richard Corbridge added.

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