

NYeC REC: First in Nation to Reach 1,000 in Meaningful Use

Those elbow-deep in the language of health IT often forget what Meaningful Use really means—and how meaningful it really is.

Today, the **New York eHealth Collaborative** put out a press release announcing that its **Regional Extension Center (REC)** has become the first (and currently the only) REC in the nation to certify over 1,000 healthcare providers for **Meaningful Use**.

The federal REC program provides educational and support services to help primary care providers and small practices convert their medical records from paper to electronic. For those practices with smaller staffs and fewer financial resources, rarely is there time or money to overhaul a system without help. For this reason, the REC proves invaluable, as its goal is not only to assist in adoption of these systems, but to ensure these systems be used in a “meaningful” way.



Practice Administrator Louise West and Carolyn Slatch, MD at Myrtle Street OB-GYN

Myrtle Street OB-GYN, a bustling practice in Saratoga Springs, was among the first in the state to join the NYeC REC and qualify for Meaningful Use (or MU).

“Myrtle Street OB-GYN was an early adopter of electronic health records because we recognized back in the spring of 2006 that not only would it improve the care we provide our patients, it creates measurable efficiencies that allow us to run a tighter business,” said Louise West, Practice Administrator.

“Achieving Meaningful Use is just the next step for us in continuing to embrace health technology.”



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It is called Meaningful Use for a reason. Electronic records allow for a higher level of security and accuracy, as they provide a more complete picture of each patient. They also remove significant barriers to data, allowing more than one doctor to study a patient's record at one time, permitting a much higher level of collaboration. Along with maintaining accurate demographic information, achieving MU means that a system can implement such tasks as drug- and allergy-interaction checks, maintain an up-to-date list of diagnoses, consolidate labs and test results, and generate and transmit prescriptions electronically.

“It's a great feeling to have helped so many providers achieve real results from using electronic medical records, which is what the term ‘Meaningful Use’ is all about. It's about improving care and helping providers create efficiencies,” said Paul Wilder, Director of the NYeC REC. “We attribute much of our success to the business partnerships we've developed with the local organizations around the state, including many Regional Health Information Organizations. New York State has made some pioneering investments in health IT and we've been able to build upon that. Meaningfully.”

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