

SHS Recognized as “Most Wired” in Healthcare

Spooner Health System (SHS) has been recognized as one of the nation’s Most Wired facilities, according to the results of the 2011 Most Wired Survey released in the July issue of *Hospitals & Health Networks* magazine. SHS is one of only 6 hospitals in Wisconsin who received this year’s award, others being much larger facilities such as Aurora Health Care in Milwaukee and Meriter Hospital in Madison.

“Being a Most Wired winner isn’t about the award,” says SHS’s IT (Information Technology) Director Mike Di Pasquale. “Rather, it is recognition that SHS is a leader in healthcare. Patients can be assured that when they come into our facility, they are going to get top-notch technology.”

Hospitals across the nation participated in a very comprehensive survey that was conducted between Jan. 15 and March 15, 2011. A major consideration on the survey is how far along the organization is with the new government mandated meaningful use. The meaningful use rule is part of a coordinated set of regulations to create a more private and secure electronic health information system. As many small, rural facilities struggle to meet the meaningful use criteria by the deadlines set by the government, SHS is very well positioned. The advancements SHS has made in the technology area the past few years not only already has them very near full-compliance, but also has served to create a safer patient environment.

Last year, SHS began using a PACS (picture archiving and communication system) which has a module that allows physicians to pull up diagnostic viewer images anywhere there is internet access. Physicians can view any radiology or x-ray study that was done at SHS from their office, home or anywhere else. It also gives the physicians in Spooner the ability to have a radiologist review a study at anytime, day or night, for assistance in diagnosis.

A digital dictation system was also implemented at SHS in the last year, which means a transition from the old-fashion tape recorders to a digital system on computers. This allows another physician to listen to a dictation before it is even transcribed by the transcriptionist.

Patients of SHS have benefited from expanded use of the Computerized Physician Order Entry (CPOE) system over the last year. Using the CPOE system, physicians are able to order medications, imaging and lab tests. They can also use it to give special dietary instructions for their patients. This system improves patient safety by eliminating the opportunity for transcription errors, confusing penmanship, or orders becoming associated with the wrong patient. All of these new forms of technology ultimately allow SHS to provide better quality and more timely care to their patients.

A big factor in receiving the Most Wired Award is how well communication is between departments. For example, how well do the lab and nursing departments interface through the electronic medical record. “Most people are quick to give all the credit to the IT department,” says Di Pasquale. “It’s not just an IT award, it is a facility award and every department should be proud of our accomplishments. IT is just the vehicle to make it happen.”

It is not unusual to have a hospital that offers state-of-the-art technology OR one that offers great service. But, it's not all that common to see both top-quality technology AND great service provided in the same location, especially in a small community. "At Spooner Health System, we are not only committed to providing the best *quality* and *safety* of care possible through technology," says SHS CEO Mike Schafer, "but we also strive to provide great service by way of our recent initiatives through our *Commitment to Excellence*."

SHS also won the Most Wired Award in 2009 and the Most Wired-Small and Rural in 2008. It is believed that SHS is the smallest hospital that has ever been awarded the Most Wired Award, and now they are being recognized for the second time. SHS has had a long-term commitment to providing great technology to enhance patient care in terms of both quality and safety.

In addition to all of the things SHS has implemented over the last year to create a safer environment, they have also been a huge supporter of the Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP). SHS was approached about the potential for helping to establish a local steering committee to apply for a grant to bring increased broadband service, through a new fiber optic network, to the Spooner area. SHS has worked with local units of government and educational institutions to apply for and receive this funding. Each of these organizations also offered up matching funds to make this possible. The increased speed and band width will allow the transmission of critical medical information such as CT scans to be sent to specialists for their opinion much faster. The faster timeframe can make a dramatic difference in the care and treatment of a patient in a critical situation. In supporting this project, SHS recognizes that not only is increased broadband service imperative for improving healthcare, it will also serve to enhance the school districts, units of government, and hope to stimulate economic development.