



PEDIATRIC ELECTRONIC HEALTH RECORDS FACE OFF IN COMPETITION

**AAP News – The Official Newsmagazine of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Volume 26 - Number 8, August 2005**

By Joseph H. Schneider, M.D., M.B.A., FAAP

A record 10 pediatric electronic health records (EHRs) went head-to-head in the third Documentation Challenge and second Pediatric EHR Recognition Program.

The recognition program required vendors to show how their EHRs documented and supported 10 pediatric issues, such as overdue vaccinations, while the Documentation Challenge was unjudged and focused on a specific scenario.

The morning session started calmly as the vendors participated in the Documentation Challenge. The scenario was a 3-year-old child with asthma who was being seen for a well-child check after a recent emergency room visit for an exacerbation. The script was prepared by Eugenia Marcus, M.D., FAAP, member of the AAP Council on Clinical Information Technology (COCIT) executive committee.

Since the script was available in advance, all of the vendors did an excellent job, and the audience of about 75 had a spirited discussion as the different ways of handling the scenario unfolded. Not all of the vendors could do all of the necessary steps, but each promised to return to future challenges with this capability.

The afternoon recognition program was lively as the demonstrators had 20 minutes to show how their system handled 10 difficult pediatric issues, including overdue vaccinations, adoption, name changes, growth charts, adolescent confidentiality, pediatric normal value ranges and pediatric weight-based prescribing. These standard scenarios were created by S. Andrew Spooner, M.D., M.S., FAAP, COCIT immediate past chair; Lewis Wasserman, M.D., FAAP, COCIT member, and Joseph H. Schneider, M.D., M.B.A., FAAP, COCIT vice chair. They are based on the paper, "Special Requirements for Electronic Medical Record Systems in Pediatrics" (*Pediatrics*, 2001:108:513-515).

Vendors entered the background historical information on the scenarios before the presentation. In their 20 minutes, each demonstrated how they would handle live data not previously known to them. The moderators were Drs. Marcus and Schneider. The judges for the Pediatric Recognition Program were COCIT Chair Mark M. Simonian, M.D., FAAP, and COCIT members Eric Handler, M.D., M.P.H., FAAP, and William Zurhellen, M.D., FAAP.

HER performance on each scenario was scored using an Apgar-like system of 0 (couldn't do it) to 2 (able to demonstrate the scenario well). Unlike last year when the race was a split decision, **this year all three judges gave first honors to Office Practicum**. Then in an extremely close race, e-MDs won second

honors and GE Healthcare took third honors. Last year's winner, Electronic Healthcare Systems, tied for 4th place, missing 3rd honors by 1 point.

All of the EHRs that received honors were capable of handling most of the complex scenarios posed. The presenters permitted to skip scenarios that they could not handle, and this affected the score of several who did not win honors.

"I would have been happy with any one of the EHRs that won honors," said Dr. Simonian. "Of course, I'd want to know more about costs, such as licensing, support, training and hardware costs."

Dr. Marcus added that "this is the second time that these awards have been given for pediatric EHRs, and we were very pleased at the level at which the honors winners performed."

The vendors who participated indicated their interest in participating in the Clinical Documentation Challenge that will be given in the Technology Learning Center at the AAP National Conference & Exhibition in October in Washington, D.C. This session will be a first for the Academy, where pediatricians will demonstrate how the software they use can handle a scenario. Clinical Documentation Challenge session also will be held at AAP Coding & Management Workshops in Newark, N.J., in November and San Antonio, Texas, in December.

Although the sessions were designed as a competition, they represent a way to improve all pediatric EHRs by raising awareness of what they can do.

The sessions were held at the 21st annual Towards Electronic Medical Records (TEPR) meeting in Salt Lake City in mid-May. The TEPR meeting is conducted by the Medical Records Institute (MRI) of Boston.

"We are very happy to offer this service to pediatricians," MRI President Peter Waegermann said. "We have been supporting pediatrics for several years now through TEPR, and we look forward to continuing these valuable programs in future TEPR meetings."

For those not able to attend TEPR, COCIT has developed a website where AAP members can post comments and score pediatric EHRs on a variety of functions or review comments posted by others. Visit www.scocit.org/emr to see this tool in action.

Dr. Schneider is vice chair of the AAP Council on Clinical Information Technology executive committee.