



# Valley Pain Specialists, PC

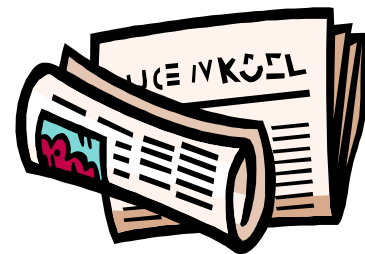
Consultants in Acute and Chronic Pain Management

Steven Mortazavi, M.D.

Kevin Hsu, M.D.

Craig Hartigan, P.A.-C

NEWSLETTER<sup>®</sup>



VOLUME 5

NUMBER 3

## Electronic Health Record Systems May Lower Malpractice Claims

A recent study in Arch Intern Med (2008;168:2362-2367) examined the link between Electronic Health Record (EHR) system use and paid malpractice claims. The results showed 6.1% of physicians using an EHR system had a paid malpractice claim compared with 10.8% of physicians without EHR systems.

Although difficult to measure precisely, it has been reported that of 307 closed malpractice cases, more than half were due to diagnostic errors that resulted in harm to the patient. (Ann Intern Med 2006;145:488-496) For example, errors occurred because the physician failed to perform a necessary diagnostic test based on protocol.

**EHR** systems allow the ability to present diagnostic and treatment guidelines to the physician, reducing possible medical errors. In addition, using an EHR system enables physicians to “de-clutter” their offices while providing the flexibility to quickly retrieve

patient information from multiple access points.

Realistically, implementation of EHR systems has some consequences as well. Often, transitioning thousands of charts into computer form may take a few months. Costs are also a consideration. This would include not only the cost of purchasing the system but also increased service and hardware maintenance. Additionally, computer malfunctions may occur during business hours making it difficult to render patient care or retrieve patient information.

Nevertheless, Electronic Health Record Systems have come a long way, and future generations of software will undoubtedly prove to be more user friendly and more sensitive to pick up potential physician errors before they occur. Nonetheless, attention to detail and keeping up with current literature remain important safety measures.

*For Information and Referrals:*

**(610) 954-9040**

*Caring*

*Compassion*

*Commitment*