

The Doctors Are In: EPISODE 2: Cornwall's go-live experience part 2[Transcript]

Introduction: You're listening to the CST Audio Network, the voice of clinical transformation.

Hello, the doctors are in. You're about to hear the second part of our three-part conversation between Dr. Eric Grafstein, one of the CST project's Chief Medical Information Officers and Dr. Geoff Heseltine, CMIO at Cornwall Community Hospital in Ontario. Cornwall was only three months into the implementation of their new Cerner clinical and information system when this conversation was recorded.

Dr. Eric Grafstein: People talk about the “valley of despair,” that period of time when you're trying to learn the system. Your productivity and efficiency is not what it was when you were on paper or doing what you were doing before. Can you talk about where you are on that curve? How are physicians finding things now?

Dr. Geoff Heseltine: I think most physicians, and it depends on department, but most physicians have improved their productivity. Many report their productivity is reaching where it was before the system or close to it. The information that we have and the care that we're providing because of the system, which is the goal at the end of the day, is probably much better at this point in time. We have easy access to our labs and our historical lab data and our historical diagnostic imaging reports. We have access to the patients' medications, and this sort of thing, which we often didn't have before. Our notes are now-- come out in a typed form. They're computerized so that you can actually read them and they make sense as opposed to the chicken-scratchings that we were trying to decipher on paper from old charts before.

Dr. Eric Grafstein: Tell me about some things that went really well and maybe some things that didn't go so well.

Dr. Geoff Heseltine: Intuitively you know things are going to change. But really it was quite an impact, and there were a lot of tears and a lot of tantrums. And a lot of frustrations at the beginning. There's no doubt. But there was also a lot of people who realized very quickly the benefits of what we were doing and the value and the quality of care that we were now being able to provide. There were certainly some challenges, a lot of the CPOE – and I think that's probably for physicians I would think the main bugaboo – we were asked to provide much more information than we were before. And some of it we see as being information that was initially done by a clerk or a nurse or a lab tech or something along that line. We've been able to scale some of that back, but that was certainly an annoyance at the beginning for physicians.

Dr. Eric Grafstein: It's good that you've been able to make some of those changes and I would say that in British Columbia because we have had an implementation already in Nanaimo there is a heightened sense of awareness, of around the challenges of CPOE, computerized provider order entry, or just the electronic physician entering of orders. And maybe you can talk about how you supported the physicians to learning CPOE and dealing with the issues they had with it.

Dr. Geoff Heseltine: That struggle has not ended at all. That's still ongoing. I think some people have come to work with it quite well, but others still find it a bit of a challenge. We have an ongoing process with feedback to physicians. They have the ability to -- a phone call or through an email, to report any issues that they have or any concerns. Some of them are obviously end-user issues. But others are real issues that are with the system, and we welcome those. Those are the sort of things that we need to find as we go forward. As we get an issue regarding CPOE we log it. We identify the end users that that affects, and we get back to them how it's been dealt with. So I've been attending all the department meetings on a monthly basis and giving them a report and allowing -- giving them also that time to give us feedback on what's working and what's not working. So it's an ongoing iterative process and the flow goes both ways, definitely.

Outro: That's it for this edition for the Doctors Are In. In our next episode you will hear the final part of the conversation in which Geoff offers Eric some advice on how to prepare for CST's first implementation.

Thanks for listening to the CST Audio Network. I'm Ron Shewchuk, Communications Director for the Clinical & System Transformation project. We look forward to your next appointment. In the meantime let us know what you think of our podcast. What do you like? How can we improve? Send us an email to info@cstproject.ca .