

JULY 11, 2012

2012 SUMMER OLYMPICS MARKS THE FIRST USE OF EHR FOR US OLYMPIANS

The US Olympic team will be traveling to London this Summer with their usual delegation of equipment and support personnel; however, they will be missing thousands of pounds of customary travel companions- paper medical records.

For the first time, thanks to a partnership between the United States Olympic Committee (USOC) and General Electric, over 500 US Olympic athletes will forgo reams of paper records in favor of digital records. The General Electric electronic health record (EHR) system utilized is currently only being offered to the US Olympic team, but GE plans to expand the system to others soon.

The benefits for the athletes are obvious; on average, each Olympian sees eight different doctors at any one time. Each doctor will have instantaneous access to that athlete's medical history with all x-rays, blood tests, and injuries listed alongside. The system, accessed through a secure and designated web portal, will allow the athlete, the USOC, and any physician authorized by the athlete, to instantly view and update that athlete's medical file.

The one exception to the electronic medical record is the athlete's drug testing results. These records are required to be segregated in a separate file maintained by the US Anti-Doping Agency.

The benefits of EHR for Olympians can be realized by general health care providers implementing EHR systems. Improved care coordination, the reduction of duplicative services, and increased medical record completeness are all benefits providers can gain through implementing EHR systems.