

Implementing A Novel Electronic Medical Record (EMR) for Street Medicine in Denver

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Street medicine is an intervention that fills an unmet gap in health services for people experiencing homelessness (PEH). This group's average lifespan is up to 30 years shorter than the general population, and they often cannot or choose not to access brick-and-mortar health systems.¹ As street medicine expands nationwide, it still faces challenges such as lack of standardized documentation and patient continuity.² This project established the first electronic medical record (EMR) for CU Street Medicine, a student-run organization that provides medical outreach to the unhoused. Previously, we utilized paper records for patient documentation, limiting our ability to track patient outcomes and optimize outreach services based on the community's needs. The piloted EMR is helping to standardize patient data collection and assess the needs of patients geographically and longitudinally to better serve patients. The EMR was built in a HIPAA-compliant database. It was used during CU Street Medicine pop-up clinics (temporary medical sites held in public venues such as food banks and churches) and street outreach throughout the Denver Metro Area. Preliminary data captured 92 patients in the EMR system. Sixty-nine patients were enrolled in a public insurance program (i.e. Medicaid, Medicare, VA), and 12 were uninsured. Forty-five individuals experienced unsheltered homelessness, 20 were stably housed in owned or rented units, 14 in shelters, and 6 in transitional housing. The most common needs were routine check-ups (n=35), wound care (n=21) and over-the-counter medication distribution (n=17). There were 20 new referrals made to primary medical care and 19 prescriptions written. Ultimately, this EMR established a vital tool to our outreach efforts and provides a scalable framework to support developments as our organization expands.

¹ Charvin-Fabre S, Stolte O, Lawrenson R. Amenable mortality within the New Zealand homeless population: we can do better! *N Z Med J.* 2020 Dec

² Tito E. Street Medicine: Barrier Considerations for Healthcare Providers in the U.S. *Cureus.* May 9, 2023 2023; 15. doi:10.7759/cureus.38761