

# xwaveEMR used by med students as part of residency training

Web-based EMR an 'everyday' tool 'essential' to care in Toronto-area family health team

Ask Ravjit Ahluwalia what practicing medicine was like before electronic medical records and he'll have a hard time remembering. Twenty-eight-year-old Ahluwalia is in his first year of post-graduate training in family medicine, and not only is he familiar with information technology; he's also comfortable using it in a clinical setting. He studied medicine at the University of Ottawa (U of O was an early adopter of wireless laptop-based learning) and he received his undergraduate degree at Hamilton's McMaster University. Now in the two-year family-medicine program at the University of Toronto, Ahluwalia is a resident at the Summerville Family Health Team, where he's using xwaveEMR. He couldn't imagine working without the support of an EMR.

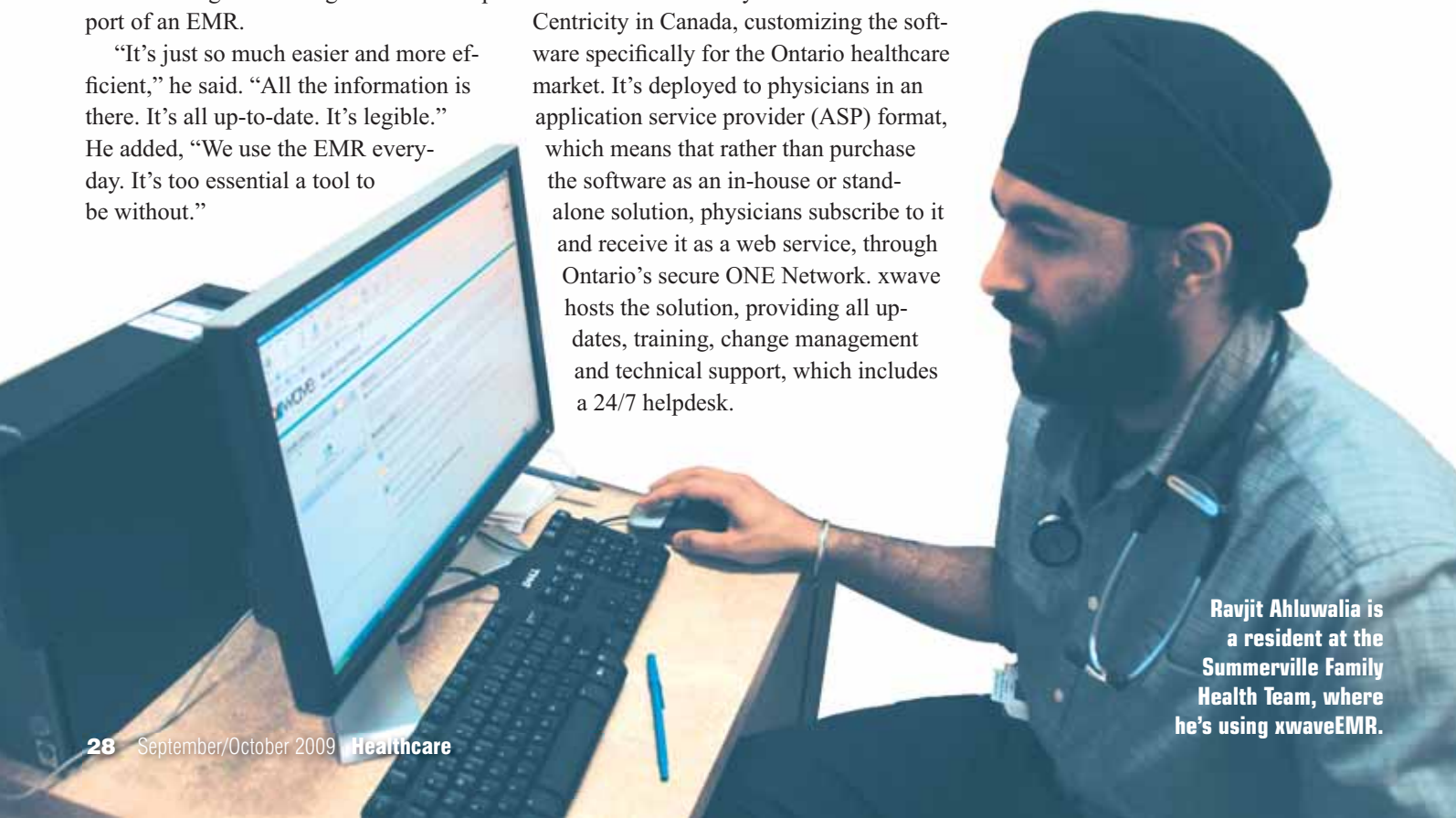
"It's just so much easier and more efficient," he said. "All the information is there. It's all up-to-date. It's legible." He added, "We use the EMR every day. It's too essential a tool to be without."

xwaveEMR is not the first electronic medical record he's used, he says, but it is the most powerful and versatile.

"The patient profile is especially intuitive," he said. "Things like immunization and past medical history are well-organized, with everything provided in a single screen – an entire page gives you an at-a-glance view of the patient, telling you immediately what you have as well as what you don't have. There's no clicking on separate tabs to look for vital information."

xwaveEMR is Ontario's first provincially-approved web-based EMR. Built in partnership with GE Healthcare, the solution is based on GE's Centricity Practice software. Centricity is used by approximately 30,000 clinicians worldwide. xwaveEMR is the only solution to offer Centricity in Canada, customizing the software specifically for the Ontario healthcare market. It's deployed to physicians in an application service provider (ASP) format, which means that rather than purchase the software as an in-house or stand-alone solution, physicians subscribe to it and receive it as a web service, through Ontario's secure ONE Network. xwave hosts the solution, providing all updates, training, change management and technical support, which includes a 24/7 helpdesk.

Launched in Ontario in 2005, xwaveEMR is now used by physicians across the province and is proving an effective enabler in areas such as chronic disease management and preventive care. The fact, too, that the solution is web-based makes it easier to integrate with external health systems. It has already been used to connect several Ontario hospitals with local family health teams. Summerville FHT, with 24 physicians and four sites in Toronto's west end, is linked with the nearby 750-bed Trillium Health Centre. The result is near real-time transmission of hospital information – discharge summaries, consultation notes, pathology reports, diagnostic imaging results – to Summerville's physicians. All information is



Ravjit Ahluwalia is a resident at the Summerville Family Health Team, where he's using xwaveEMR.

intelligently 'sorted' by xwave and pushed automatically to the corresponding physician's desktop.

"Part of what's made this work so well is that it's integrated 100 percent into our workflow," said Summerville's Dr. David Daien, a lead on the project. "Doctors don't have to remember to open an application or download an update; the information is delivered directly into their EMR." Consequently, he points out, no specific training was required for the integration with Trillium. Now, as a result, information from the hospital arrives in minutes rather than days, and scanning at Summerville has been reduced by upwards of 50 percent.

Ravjit Ahluwalia is one of four residents using xwaveEMR at the Trillium-Summerville Family Medicine Teaching



xwaveEMR is web-based, making it easier to integrate with external health systems.

Unit. A joint initiative between Summerville, Trillium and U of T, the Trillium-Summerville FMTU opened July 1, 2009 and is expected to support 18 residents by 2012. It's the first FMTU in Ontario to use a web-based EMR.

"With a single username and password, residents can access their patients' charts from Trillium, U of T and all four sites at Summerville," said Summerville's Dr. Michael Kates. "This is the kind of connectivity and data mobility that will be increasingly in demand as information technology becomes more pervasive

in primary care and, in particular, as the emphasis on preventive and proactive care continues to grow."

"The biggest advantages with this technology," said Ahluwalia, "are the continuity of care and the accuracy of details." If another doctor has seen a patient, he says by way of an example, everything is noted and tracked in the patient's chart.

While Ahluwalia has essentially cut his teeth on EMRs, he's also worked with older doctors who have only recently made the transition. "Most of them end up wondering why they didn't make the switch earlier."

He added that where EMRs are concerned, "there's no looking back."

**xwave**

Reader Reply Card #1543

Web link: [baumpub.com/HC1543](http://baumpub.com/HC1543)